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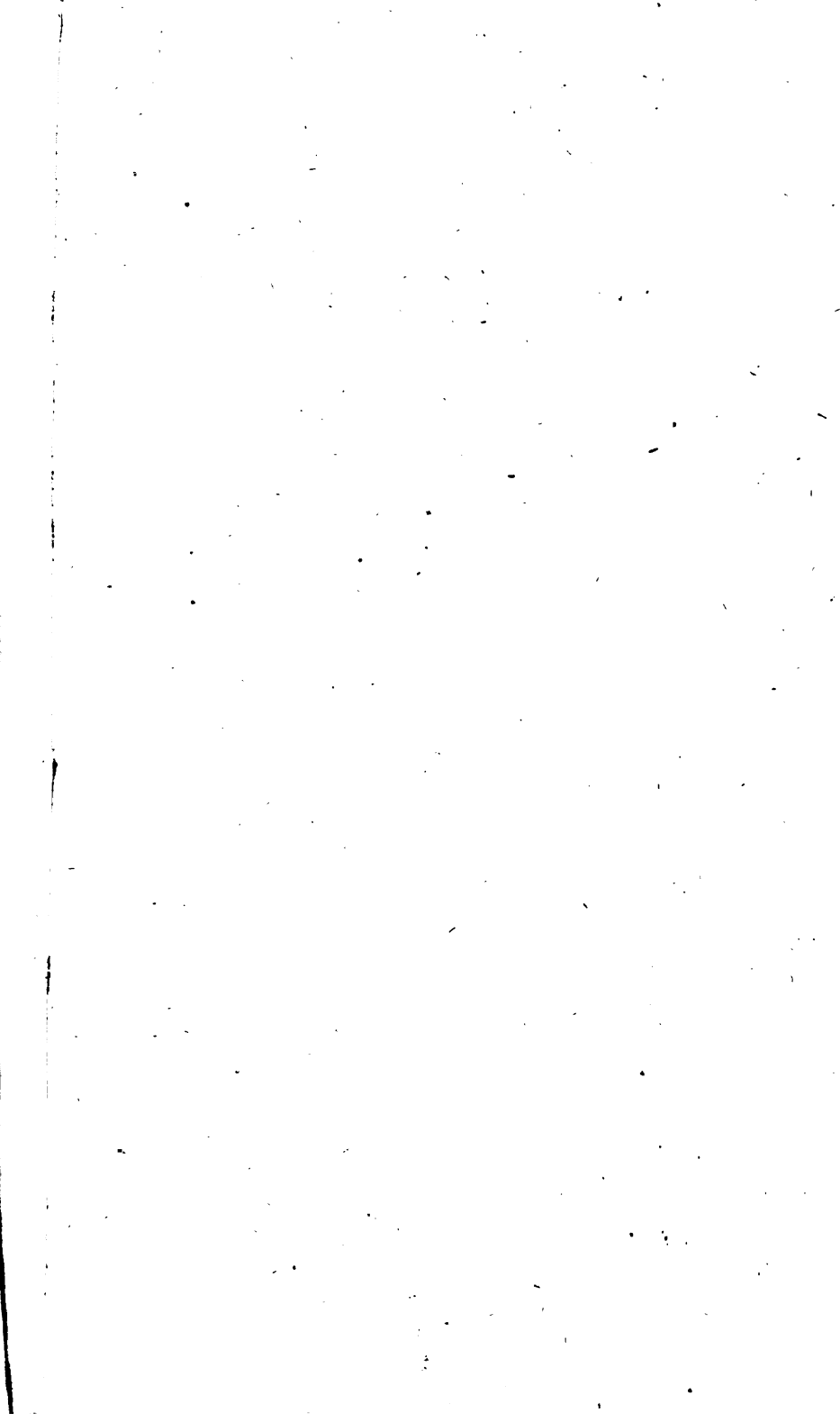


Robert William Shaw.



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A
CRITICAL EXAMINATION
OF
THE WRITINGS
OF
RICHARD CUMBERLAND, Esq.

WITH AN
OCCASIONAL LITERARY INQUIRY INTO THE AGE
IN WHICH HE LIVED,
AND THE CONTEMPORARIES WITH WHOM HE FLOURISHED.

Also,

Memoirs of his Life.

AND

AN APPENDIX,

CONTAINING TWENTY-SIX OF HIS ORIGINAL LETTERS,
relating to a Transaction not mentioned in his own Memoirs.

BY WILLIAM MUDFORD.

A NEW AND IMPROVED EDITION,
IN TWO VOLUMES.

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TO VIMU
ABSORBIAO

CHAP. XIV.

Cumberland's literary enterprises suspended for a time by the death of his parents.—Observations on the bigotry of Catholicism.—Produces the CHOLERIC MAN.—Examination of this play. Does not discriminate between accidental anger and general passion.—Dedicates the play to DETRACTION.—Observation of MURPHY'S.—Cumberland thinks it the best of his dramas.—Examples of its deficiency in point and spirit.—Writes and publishes two ODES.—Alters and spoils SHAKSPEARE'S TIMON OF ATHENS.—The opinions of MURPHY and DAVIES upon this alteration.

THE literary enterprises of Cumberland now suffered some interruption from the death of his father and mother, which happened so immediately together, that his mind must have keenly felt the stroke. Where there has existed a cordial and reciprocal affection between a child and his parents, where that affection has ripened into rational veneration, founded upon a real appreciation of the virtues of its object, and where it springs both from the recollection of past services and endearments, and from the consciousness of a pious duty, there are few events in this world more dreadful, more severely proportioned to our powers of endurance, than the death of such parents. We feel the eternal separation with more than filial

sorrow, and mingle with our tears the bitterness of remembering that we have lost the friend, and the companion, as well as the father and the benefactor. It is, then, indeed, that the quaint but emphatic line of Young becomes a moral truth :

“ When such friends part—’tis the survivor dies.”

Cumberland’s father had been translated to the see of Kilmore, and gained, by the exchange, a better house to live in, and a race of beings, somewhat more civilized, to control. The annual visits of his son had never been intermitted, and thus, perhaps, he found the wish nearest his heart amply gratified. But the decay of his bodily health became more and more visible to Cumberland, as each returning summer conveyed him to the paternal roof: and he saw this decay with foreboding thoughts, that were too soon verified. The uniform temperance of his father’s life, left indeed every ground for hope which can be derived from the advantages of a constitution not debilitated by excesses: but the phenomena of life are reducible to no immutable laws; we sometimes see the man whose days have been but a round of debauch flourishing in a vigorous old age, while he whose temperate wishes never hurried him beyond the wholesome bounds of moderation, drops into the grave in comparative youth.

The Bishop of Kilmore was one of nature’s most abstemious children. He had subdued all

his passions, or rather he had regulated them, by the strict line of christian precept and example. A noble triumph! and displaying a nature so amiable that even they who cannot hope to imitate the original, find themselves instinctively filled with love and veneration as they contemplate it. Our wonder and applause are easily excited by the conspicuous deeds of the great, in that estimation of greatness, which the world inculcates; but did we know and fully appreciate how much easier it is to subdue others than to subdue ourselves, how much less of moral energy it demands to conquer innumerable hosts than to overcome any of the corrupt propensities of our own nature, we should sometimes be tempted to moderate our admiration of the one, and tear the chaplet of renown from the brow of him whom we now call great, to bind it round his whose greatness is superior in its origin, its progress, and its aim. Nor need we peevishly deny the wreath of glory to the illustrious beings who have adorned the world, who have blessed it as statesmen, philosophers, and sometimes as heroes; but we may be allowed to wish that the modest, the silent, the retiring, and the unobtrusive virtues of the self-conqueror, of him who employs the knife and the caustic upon his own frame, were sometimes rewarded by the grateful homage of applauding virtue, seeking to imitate what it approves. But the grave of the good man lies level with the

earth, and the eye cannot distinguish it from the common dust with which it mingles; while the tomb of the distinguished, pre-eminent in vice, perhaps, as well as in greatness, rises before us in our path, and points out the road that led its possessor too often to the grandeur of guilt, rather than to the exaltation of virtue. Let the pen of truth, however, record those qualities which are sometimes delusively engraven upon the marble of the sepulchre, that it may serve at once as the reward of goodness and its incentive.

To this character Cumberland's father seems well entitled, and his death must have been very sensibly felt by his son. It was gradual and gentle; but at what period it took place, Cumberland, with his accustomed and absurd negligence with regard to dates, leaves in uncertainty. It was somewhere, however, near the period when his comedy of the *Fashionable Lover* was produced, and that was in the year 1772. To add to his sorrows, his mother soon followed her husband to the grave, and it must have been an additional aggravation of these multiplied sorrows that he was prevented attending them in their last moments, by the unsettled state of his own health, which compelled him to remain at Bath for the benefit of the waters. One surviving sister, however, "the best and most benevolent of human beings," was present to discharge the duties of that melancholy office, the inevitable neglect of which

Cumberland seems to have regretted with much sincerity. His father was interred in a small patch of ground adjoining to the church-yard of Kilmore, but not within the pale of consecrated earth. That bigotry which stains and corrupts the catholic religion, forbade the mouldering ashes of a protestant bishop to lie in the church-yard of his own diocese. Well might the indignant and pathetic author of the *Night Thoughts* exclaim, as he remembered the painful labours with which he *stole* a grave for his departed *Narcissa*,—

Oh! the curs'd ungodliness of zeal!
While sinful flesh relented, spirit nurs'd
In blind Infallibility's embrace,
The sainted spirit petrify'd the breast,
Deny'd the charity of dust to spread
O'er dust! a charity their dogs enjoy.

When we remember, also, that the catholic peasantry of his diocese, who almost adored him while living, and who filled the air with lamentations at his death, would have torn his shrouded corpse with indignation from its cemetery, had it been deposited in *their* consecrated burial-place, we immediately recollect the following appropriate lines from the same author:—

Their eyes let fall
Inhuman tears! strange tears! that trickled down
From marble hearts! obliterate tenderness!
A tenderness that call'd them more severe,
In spite of Nature's soft persuasion steel'd:
While Nature melted, Superstition rav'd!
That mourn'd the dead, and this deny'd a grave.

Cumberland's own observation upon this transaction is equally tender and just: "while," says he, "I believe and am persuaded, that his incorruptible is received into bliss eternal, what concerns it me where his corruptible is laid?" This, after all, is the whole that it amounts to. We do but choose our rotting place, and all our anxieties about where we shall be interred comes only to this, that we want a little earth to hide the disgusting spectacle of a putrid carcase.

When he had leisure from his grief to resume the operations of his pen, he sat down to the composition of the *Choleric Man*, and in 1775 it was produced on the stage of Drury-Lane. It was successful, and perhaps deserved to be so; but it is executed with less uniformity of skill than was displayed in his *West Indian* and *Fashionable Lover*.

In the character of the *Choleric Man*, (*Nightshade*,) he lost the opportunity which he possessed, of exhibiting the passion of anger as a prevailing quality, by making him always in a passion, and too often without sufficient or apparent provocation: he is rather an outrageous bully whom nothing can please, than a man of morbid irritability whom most things can displease. Had he looked abroad upon life, he would have found no such being as *his* choleric man, for no individual exists in a constant whirlwind of passion: no individual exists, (out of Bedlam at least) who has so far subdued his reason to the exacerbations of

a violent temper, that he raves with fury if he be contradicted, and yet extols his own patience and meekness.

This he would not have found: but he might have found, and too easily, indeed, for the happiness of mankind, men whom long indulgence in their own excesses has so corrupted, that they deform every scheme of social life, into which they are permitted to intrude, with storm and tempest; men who have pampered themselves into habits of such bloated arrogance, that they despise all the blandishments of society, and, like wayward children who annoy one into compliance, they enforce a toleration of their excesses because to contend with their exactions would be to provoke greater evils than are sought to be avoided. Yet even these men have their intervals of calm and quiet: for it commonly happens that their anger is roused by the application of peculiar behaviour, or the discussion of peculiar topics, as it is often found that insanity manifests itself only when a particular idea is forced upon the attention. They are not always angry, like the *Choleric Man* of Cumberland, but sometimes assume the appearance and have the reality of reason.

To have discriminated this difference would have afforded scope for a fine display of character, by exhibiting the inconsistencies into which the same man may be betrayed who is, at one time, the slave of violence, and at another the creature of reason.

From such a character, also, he might have deduced a just moral, by contrasting the virtues of his calm moments with the vices and follies of his enraged ones ; and shewing that there is no security in the integrity of a passionate man by making him annul, or destroy, the efficacy of those beneficent actions which he may have performed in the cool moments of deliberate and rational conduct.

This was what the author might have done with such a character, instead of which he has exhibited merely an impetuous ruffian, whose reformation is at last produced by an act of violence committed from such an idle provocation, or rather from no provocation at all, that both the reader and the spectator despise the extravagance of the incident.

The remaining personages of this play may be dismissed without much examination. The two brothers are opposed to each other with such an obvious contrast of sentiments and conduct, that we know the author's intention must have been merely to produce an antithesis of character, if I may be allowed the expression : for, such fraternal contrariety is seldom witnessed in actual life. They seem to have been drawn in imitation of those artificially contrasted characters which are to be found in the plays of our best dramatists, but which always betray a poverty of invention. It is so easy, when one brother is calm and placid, to make the other rough and boisterous, or if one be crafty and insidious to pourtray the other

open, ingenuous, and unsuspecting, that a superior writer might justly despise such an expedient for its facility: while it might be worthy of his highest ambition to discriminate them by those delicate and almost evanescent shades of character which gradually blend into each other like the prismatic colours, and yet are distinguished one from the other.

Cumberland, however, thought differently upon this subject, and speaks of the "comic force" with which the contrast between the two brothers is supported, while he seems to applaud the invention that contrived that contrast. But an author has long been reputed the very worst judge of his own works, whence, perhaps, the reason that Cumberland says, of the present play, "that the characters are *humorously* contrasted, and there is *point* and *spirit* in the dialogue;" and that, if ever an editor shall, hereafter, make a collection of his dramas, this "will stand forward as one of the most prominent among them." To this opinion, thus modestly expressed, I must object from a strong conviction, in my own mind, that the dialogue has neither *point* nor *spirit*.

Perhaps, what the author has dignified with these appellations, may appear to others dull and vapid; as, for example, when *Manlove* inquires of his clerk what fee he received with a case from a tailor, who asks how he is to proceed against his wife for adultery: the clerk replies, "a light

guinea," and Manlove answers, "tis more than a *light* woman deserves"—and adds, in a strain of equal wit and raillery, "give the tailor his guinea again; bid him proceed to his work, and leave a good for nothing wife to go on with hers; and hark'ee Frampton, you seem to want a new coat, suppose you let him take your measure: *the fellow, you see, would fain be cutting out work for the lawyers.*"

I have no doubt that when Cumberland wrote this, he conceived he was producing a witty observation; but I greatly doubt whether any person ever thought so besides himself.

Neither can I much commend the *point* of the following remark.

"I must believe," says *Letitia*, "that no man would descend from the character of a gentleman, who was not wanting in the requisites that go to the support of it."

If a man want that which is essential to any thing, he cannot surely be said to possess it: and if he do not possess it, how can he forfeit the possession?

If it were to such felicities of composition that Cumberland alluded, when he pronounced so favourably of this play, the question is decided: but probably he might mistake a dialogue approaching nearly to licentiousness for *point* and *spirit*, in which case I can suppose he had in his mind the scene between *Letitia*, *Mrs. Stapleton*, and *Jack*

Nightshade, in the picture-room: a scene no less distinguished for its absurdity of exaggerated ignorance, than for a strain of conversation that treads upon the very heels of indecency, and is preposterously uttered in the presence of a young lady, unapproved by her or the matron who accompanies her.

The citizens, and especially the aldermen, must have felt themselves greatly indebted to the courtesy of Cumberland, when he consigned them all to the honours of cuckoldom in one comprehensive inference. When the choleric man breaks the head of a horn-blower, and inquires of his servant in what state the wound is, he replies, "he would not have such a star in his forehead, to be the richest alderman in the city of London," to which his master rejoins, "tis a pity but he had been one, for then his horns might have warded off the blow." It may be that even this was accounted *spirit* and *point* by the writer: but I should be sorry to pronounce it such.

To this comedy is prefixed a long dissertation which he calls a *Dedication to Detraction*. It is not written with much humour, but it shews how keenly he smarted from contemporary criticism, and how anxious he was to persuade the world that he did not feel at all. There is some erudition idly lavished upon a topic which did not deserve consideration, and which seems to have been produced rather as an ostentatious display of his intel-

lectual stores than from any necessity that was forced upon him by personal considerations. It was pertinently observed by Murphy, who mentions this play in his life of Garrick, "that if the reader wished to have the true idea of a *Choleric Man*, he would find it in the Dedication to Detraction, prefixed to the play."

His next undertaking was to write and publish, in 1776, two odes, one to the sun, written at Keswick; and invoking the appearance of that luminary which did not shine often enough for the author's accommodation, and the other to Dr. James, eulogising his powders because they cured Cumberland's son of a dangerous fever. Of these twin productions I know no more than what may be learned from the extracts which Cumberland has preserved in his *Memoirs*, and they do not excite any wish to increase my knowledge.

To the sun he says,

"Soul of the world, refulgent sun,
Oh take not from my ravish'd sight,
Those golden beams of living light,
Nor, ere thy golden course be run
Precipitate the night.
Lo, where the *ruffian clouds* arise,
Usurp the abdicated skies,
And seize th' ethereal throne;
Sullen sad the scene appears,
Huge Helvellyn *streams with tears*:
Hark! 'tis giant Skiddaw's groan;
I hear terrific Lawdoor roar;
The sabbath of thy reign is o'er,
The anarchy's begun;
Father of light return: break forth refulgent sun!"

In the ode to Dr. James is the following description of the person of death :

“ On his pale steed erect the monarch stands,
His *dirk* and javelin glittering in his hands ;
This from a distance deals th’ ignoble blow,
And that despatches the resisting foe :
 Whilst all beneath him, as he flies,
 Dire are the tossings, deep the cries,
The landscape darkens and the season dies.”

In these lines there is nothing to commend. The best parts are those which he has taken from other writers, for I trace, in them, the acknowledged property of Milton, Addison, and Mason.

These odes, when published, being addressed to Romney, who was then lately returned from pursuing his studies at Rome, Johnson observed that they were made to carry double, as being subsidiary to the fame of another man : but when he allowed that “ they would have been thought as good as odes commonly are, if Cumberland had not put his name to them,” I suppose he intended an indirect depreciation of Gray.

In the ensuing year (1777) he turned his thoughts towards altering one of Shakspeare’s plays, (*Timon of Athens*) and adapting it for the modern stage. This had already been attempted by Shadwell in 1678, and by Love in 1768 : but in neither case was the project successful, and Cumberland’s shared the fate of its precursors. To amend Shakspeare, indeed, is a task which demands no

ordinary powers of mind, and though it has been done with some sort of plausibility, where the strong interest of the piece has overcome the defects of mutilations, transpositions, and omissions, (as in *Richard the Third*, the *Tempest*, and *King Lear*) it will hardly be endured, when the chief delight of the reader or spectator arises from the majesty of Shakspeare's thoughts, and the matchless excellence of his language, as is peculiarly the case in *Timon of Athens*. The fable of this play is less intricate than most of Shakspeare's ; but the flashes of genius that illumine the whole, the profound knowledge of life which is displayed in the speeches of *Timon*, his caustic severity of satire, his manly fulminations against the herd of parasites who surrounded him, and his nobleness of nature in the midst of all his excesses, are touches so peculiarly Shakspeare's that no man can successfully incorporate any thing of his own with them. How Cumberland has succeeded let the following specimens testify :

“ *Act II. Scene III.*

“ *Lucullus and Lucius.*

Lucul.—How now, my Lord? in private?

Lus.—Yes, I thought so,

Till an unwelcome intermeddling Lord

Stept in and ask'd the question.

Lucul.—What, in anger!

By heav'ns I'll gall him! for he stands before me

In the broad sunshine of Lord Timon's bounty,

And throws my better merits into shade. (*Aside*).

Luc.—Now would I kill him if I durst. (*Aside*).

Lucul.—Methinks

You look but coldly. What has cross'd your suit?
Alas, poor Lucius! but I read your fate
In that unkind one's frown.

Luc.—No doubt, my Lord,

You, that receive them ever, are well-ven'd
In the unkind-one's frowns: as the clear stream
Reflects your person, so may you espy
In the sure mirror of her scornful brow
The clouded picture of your own despair.

Lucul.—Come, you presume too far; talk not thus idly
To me, who know you.

Luc.—Know me?

Lucul.—Aye, who know you,

For one, that courses up and down on errands,
A stale retainer at Lord Timon's table;
A man grown great by making legs and cringes,
By winding round a wanton spendthrift's heart,
And gulling him at pleasure—Now do I know you?

Luc.—Gods, must I bear this? bear it from Lucullus!

I, who first brought thee to Lord Timon's stirrup,
Set thee in sight, and breath'd into thine ear
The breath of hope? What hadst thou been, ingrateful,
But that I took up Jove's imperfect work,
Gave thee a shape, and made thee into man?

Alcibiades to them.

Alcib.—What, wrangling, Lords, like hungry curs for crusts?

Away with this unmanly war of words!
Pluck forth your shining rapiers from their shells,
And level boldly at each other's hearts.
Hearts did I say? Your hearts are gone from home,
And hid in Timon's coffers—Fie upon it!

Luc.—My Lord Lucullus, I shall find a time.

Alcib.—Hah! find a time! the brave make time and place.

Gods, gods, what things are men! you'll find a time?
A time for what?—To murder him in's sleep?
The man, who wrongs me, at the altar's foot
I'll seize, yea, drag him from the shelt'ring ægis
Of stern Minerva.

Luc.—Aye; 'tis your profession.

Alcib.—Down on your knees, and thank the gods for that,

Or woe for Athens, were it left to such
 As you are to defend. Do ye not hate
 Each other heartily? Yet neither dares
 To bear his trembling falchion to the sun.
 How tame they dangle on your coward thighs!

Lucul.—We are no soldiers, Sir.

Alcib.—No, ye are Lords;

A lazy, proud, unprofitable crew;
 The vermin gender'd from the rank corruption
 Of a luxurious state—No soldiers, say you?
 And wherefore are ye none? Have ye not life,
 Friends, honour, freedom, country, to defend?
 He, that hath these, by nature is a soldier,
 And, when he wields his sword in their defence,
 Instinctively fulfils the end he lives for.—"

&c. &c.

This is Cumberland's own; and how it accords with the sentiments and language of Shakspeare, I need not tell. The piece was acted however, but it met with a cold reception, though supported by the talents of Mr. and Mrs. Barry. The opinion of its failure has been uniformly expressed by all who have mentioned the undertaking. "What Mr. Cumberland did to such a play," says Murphy, "or how he contrived to mangle it, is now not worth the trouble of enquiring."

"Those who have read Shadwell's *Timon*," observes Davies, in his *Life of Garrick*, (and his opinion upon a question of theatrical adaptation is entitled to respect), "will not, I believe, scruple to prefer it to Mr. Cumberland's, though both the alterers had better have forborne a task to which they were unequal. It is almost impossible to graft large branches upon the old stock of Shaks-

peare ; none have succeeded in their alterations of that poet, but such as have confined themselves to the lopping off a few superfluous boughs, and adding, where necessary, some small slips of their own, and that too with the utmost caution."

"The alterer has, by his management, utterly destroyed all pity for the principal characters of the play. Shadwell gave Timon a mistress, who never forsook him in his distress ; but Mr. Cumberland has raised him up a daughter, whose fortune the father profusely spends on flatterers and sycophants ; this destroys all probability, as well as extinguishes commiseration. What generous and noble-minded man, as Shakspeare has drawn his Timon, would be guilty of such baseness as to wrong his child, by treating his visitors with the wealth that should be reserved for her portion ?

"It is, indeed, a miserable alteration of one of Shakspeare's noblest productions. There is not, perhaps, in any work, ancient or modern, more just reflection and admirable satire than in Timon ; Cumberland and his original do not, in the least, assimilate, for in their style they are widely different ; some excellent scenes of Shakspeare are entirely omitted, and others grossly mutilated."

From these testimonies, and from the present oblivion of the piece, we may conclude, without much fear of violating truth, that had Cumberland duly considered his fame as a writer, he would have abstained from an attempt which can only

confer an humble reward, if successful, but will incur much contempt if unsuccessful.

The last thing which Cumberland produced on the Drury-lane stage, before the secession of Garrick from its management, was the *Note of Hand, or a Trip to Newmarket*. This farce was acted with moderate applause ; and was the cause, it has been said, as I have already noticed, that Sheridan transplanted the author to his canvass, when he drew the character of *Sir Fretful*.

CHAP. XV.

The fecundity of Cumberland's muse.—Produces the BATTLE OF HASTINGS.—Examination of this tragedy.—Its total deficiency in every thing that constitutes a tragedy.—Examples of his plagiarisms from SHAKSPEARE, POPE, and other writers.—Instances of the pure BATHOS.—If SHERIDAN laughed at it who could blame him?—Cumberland obtains promotion in his office.

THERE was at least as much truth as gaiety in Cumberland's prologue to the *Fashionable Lover*, when he said of himself,

“ This bard breeds regularly once a season.”

His eagerness to produce, indeed, was greater than his caution to produce well ; and this eagerness appears somewhat remarkable, if we believe his own declaration to Bickerstaff, that in commencing author he was actuated by motives purely “ disinterested.” To him who writes for bread, it may sometimes be forgiven, if he writes more than will enlarge his fame ; but there is no excuse for a man who sacrifices his reputation to a mere itch of composition which must always be relieved by the scratching of a pen. I have no doubt, how-

ever, that when Cumberland composed his dramas he thought at least as much of the treasurer of the theatre as he did of the rumours of renown, or the pleasure of beholding himself in print. His were golden dreams ; and Fame presented herself to his imagination, with the lucky profits of an author's three nights pleasantly glittering in her hand.

The next offspring of his fast-teeming muse was the *Battle of Hastings*, a tragedy, of which he says but little himself, and of which little can be said by any one in its favour. I have heard that Garrick interested himself in its fate, and recommended it warmly to Sheridan's protection, but that Cumberland did not testify a just sense of his exertions, which greatly hurt the feelings of Garrick, who openly expressed his displeasure at such an unmerited requital. Something, however, is attributed, in this account, perhaps, to a wrong cause ; for Cumberland represents himself as having been unjustly treated by Garrick, who empowered him to engage Henderson for Drury Lane, and afterwards annulled the engagement upon the report of his brother George, who saw him perform at Bath, and formed a less exalted notion of his excellence. The acrimony which this proceeding excited, Cumberland was probably not anxious to conceal ; and the expression of it was attributed to a motive very distinct, perhaps, from what really existed. Such negligence is too common in the rumours of popu

pular report, and too often engenders feuds and abhorrence, where kindness and respect might otherwise have existed.

From whatever cause, however, it may have arisen, I fear there was some coolness between Garrick and Cumberland a short time previously to the death of the former, who, when he was asked his opinion of the *Battle of Hastings*, constantly evaded a distinct answer, by replying, *Sir, what all the world says must be true*; a mode of replication which evidently sprung from an unwillingness to utter a falsehood, and too much kindness for the man to tell an unwelcome truth.

In the prologue to this play, the author again acquaints the world with what pangs the critic's sneer affected him, and how he smarted from the attacks of newspaper writers; again he whines about detraction, and the hard fate it was his lot to endure. The audiences of those days must have been patient beings, for I doubt if any such complaints would now be tolerated. These are his lines of dolorous declamation :

“ Your poet thus profanely led aside,
To range o'er tragic land without a guide,
To pick, perhaps, with no invidious aim,
A few east fallings from the tree of fame.
Damn'd, tho' untried, by the despotic rule
Of the stern doctors in detraction's school;
Lash'd down each column of a public page,
And driv'n o'er burning ploughshares to the stage;
Be-rhim'd and ridicul'd with doggrel wit,
Sues out a pardon from his Pope—the Pit.

Pensive he stands in penitential weeds,
With a huge rosary of untold beads ;
Sentenc'd for past offences to rehearse
Ave Apollos to the God of verse ;
And sure there's no one but an author knows
The penance which an author undergoes.

To this cant, from a man who professed to write for pleasure only, and not for bread, a brief answer might have been given—abjure the path that is so thorny ; you entered it for amusement ; but as there can be no amusement in the persecution you so pathetically deplore, escape the one by renouncing the other. To such a reply, had it been offered, what could Cumberland have said ?

Of the tragedy itself I have not much to say. I will not analyse its plot, nor examine its characters. They are both too feeble to provoke censure. The incidents are few and uninteresting, and belong neither to tragedy nor comedy ; they are too dull for the latter, and too trivial for the former. The title sufficiently expresses from what period of English history the action is derived ; but he who had not read the play would scarcely anticipate that the battle of Hastings could be made the argument of a drama, and the Duke of Normandy excluded from its characters. Cumberland seems to have wholly forgotten what a noble plot might have been formed from the introduction of William, and the contrasted hopes and fears of his Norman followers with those of the English army ;

or, perhaps, he saw the greatness, but felt he could not reach it.

What success this play had I have not heard. Cumberland is silent upon the subject, and hence it may be inferred that it was not very eminent. It did not indeed deserve success; for, besides the barrenness of the plot, and the imbecility of the characters, the sentiments and language form such a motley whole, as will not easily be paralleled. Instead of catching any of the warm and glowing energy of Shakspeare, Otway, or Southerne, instead of forming himself upon them, he appears to have borrowed only the worst features from the tragedies of Rowe and Phillips; imitating their cold and artificial declamations, their frigid similes, and unnatural tumour of expression. These he mistook for that elevation of style, that measured cadence of verse, and that dignity of sentiment, which belong to tragedy as the representation of great and striking events.

Some instances of these defects shall be here produced, as they may, at least, amuse the reader, especially if he have ever found pleasure in *The Art of Sinking*, by Martinus Scriblerus. The play, indeed, does not require the application of serious criticism; it defies it.

When *Raymond* issues from the castle to receive his master, in the first scene, he thinks it necessary that the bugle should be sounded, but, as it would be unsuitable for a tragic writer to use such

colloquial expressions as *blow* or *sound*, he bids the herald "*provoke* the bugle," by which an unlearned reader might suppose it to be something capable of anger, rather than a passive instrument susceptible only of noise. I have no objection to the metaphorical use of the word *provoke*, only here the occasion did not justify it, and its employment reminded me of the writer who feared to bid his servant shut the door, but exclaimed

" The wooden guardian of our privacy
Quick on its axle turn*.

Nothing can be more distinct from dignity than such a turgid phraseology. " Ce'st une belle chose," observes Corneille, " que de faire vers puissans et majestueux ; cette pompe ravit d'ordinaire les esprits, et pour le moins les éblouet ; mais il faut que les sujets en fassent naître les occasions."

Edgar returning at night to his mistress, finds the castle gate open. An ordinary man would have concluded that the porter or warder had forgotten to lock it ; but a poetical lover understands the matter in a very different way.

* Pope, who ridiculed this bombast, (or perhaps wrote it as a specimen of what should be ridiculed), has exhibited the same operation in a manner not less swollen :

" The bolt obedient to the silken cord,
To the strong staple's inmost depth restor'd,
Secur'd the valve." *Odyssey, B. I.*

“ O Love!

Small elf, who, by the glow-worm's twinkling light,
Fine fairy-finger'd child, can slip the bolt
While the cramm'd warden snores, this is thy doing.”

This fanciful account is perfectly in character, it must be confessed; and I suppose if the author had brought a house-breaker to the spot, instead of a lover, the gentleman finding the event equally convenient for his purpose, would have ascribed all the honour and glory of it to Mercury, who is the patron god of thieves as Cupid is of lovers.

There is nothing more dangerous to a man than the ambition of imitating what is far beyond his powers of performance. When Phaeton mounted the chariot of his father, he perished for his presumption. A direct endeavour to equal another provokes the most rigorous comparison; and no one should attempt it who does not feel a confidence amounting to conviction, that he can perform what he attempts. Shakspeare, in his *Midsummer Night's Dream*, soars into one of his boldest flights in describing the poet, whose

“ Eye, in a fine frenzy rolling,
Doth glance from heaven to earth, from earth to heaven,
And, as imagination bodies forth
The forms of things unknown, the poet's pen
Turns them to shapes, and gives to airy nothing,
A local habitation, and a name.”

This lofty and majestic description Cumberland obviously labours to imitate in the following one:

“ The poet, by the magic of his song,
Can charm the listening moon, ascend the spheres,
And in his airy and extravagant flight
Belt wide creation's round.”

This is frigid enough ; but the conclusion exceeds it, for the reader will hardly imagine that *Edgar*, who utters this to his mistress, does it to assure her, that though the poet can perform such feats as those described,

“ Yet can he never
Invent that form of words to speak his passion.”

Cumberland is not a modest borrower, indeed ; he draws largely upon the property of others, and Sheridan might have justified the name he gave him from this play alone. For the gratification of the reader I will trace him through a few of his boldest thefts ; such as are but slightly transmuted in passing through his intellectual crucible.

In *Hamlet* we find *Laertes* giving just counsel to his sister, and warning her how frail is virgin reputation, in the following lines of matchless beauty :

“ The charest maid is prodigal enough,
If she unmask her beauty to the moon :
Virtue itself 'scapes not calumnious strokes ;
The canker galls the infants of the spring
Too oft before their buttons be disclosed ;
And in the morn and liquid dew of youth
Contagious blastments are most imminent.

In the tragedy before us, Earl Edwin is made to say,

“ The tenderest flower that withers at the breeze,
Or, if the amorous sun but steal a kiss,
Drops its soft head and dies, is not more frail
Than maiden reputation ; 'tis a mirror
Which the first sigh defiles.”

Here the imitation is rather in the idea than in the expression ; in the following it is in both. Macbeth, meditating the murder of Duncan, observes, that

“ Pity, like a naked, new-born babe,
Striding the blast, or heaven's cherubim, hors'd
Upon the sightless couriers of the air,
Shall blow the horrid deed in every eye,
That tears shall drown the wind.”

Edgar returns to the camp of Harold with great expedition, riding against time perhaps. *Edwin* tells him,

“ You methinks did ride,
As you'd o'ertake the couriers of the sky,
Hors'd on the sightless winds.”

Pope says, in his *Essay on Criticism*,

“ Praise undeserv'd is scandal in disguise.”

And *Matilda* says in the *Battle of Hastings*,

“ Praise undeserv'd, what is it but reproach ? ”

But the line would have been better had he taken the other half of it from the same author.

Shakspeare is the chief storehouse whence Cumberland drew his allusions, when he needed striking and emphatic ones. In Richard the Third, the tyrant exclaims, with a savage ferocity of truth,

“Crowns got by blood, must be by blood maintain’d.”

And this sort of royal logic Harold employs when he says,

“Possessions by ill deeds obtain’d, by worse
Must be upheld.”

Alliterative harmony is a favourite ornament with some writers, and when skilfully used, as it has been by Milton and Pope, it produces an effect not unpleasing to the ear. Cumberland occasionally employs it, but when, in the fourth act, *Elwina* talks of a “bloody breathless corse,” it recalls the ludicrous exemplification of this figure by Shakspeare :

“Whereat with blade, with bloody, blameful blade,
He bravely broach’d his boiling, bloody breast.”

Had Cumberland lived when the renowned treatise on the *Bathos* was published, and had he written this tragedy before it was composed, how vast a fund for illustration it would have afforded. I could select numerous instances of the *profound* from its pages ; but a few shall suffice. I think the following may be considered as an authentic

specimen. *Edwin* thus solemnly adjures *Edgar* to resume his post in the field of battle :

“ By your thrice plighted oath I do conjure you,
By all the world calls honest, by your hopes,
Come to the camp.”

Such a pompous exordium leading to such a lame and impotent conclusion (like the stately palaces of the Russian nobility, which often conduct to internal meanness and poverty) resembles the burlesque lines of Johnson :

“ Hermit hoar, in solemn cell
Wearing out life's evening gray,
Strike thy bosom, sage, and tell
What is bliss, and which the way ?

Thus I spoke, and speaking sigh'd,
Scarce repress'd the starting tear :
When the hoary sage replied,
Come my lad and drink some beer.”

The witty Duke of Buckingham in the *Rehearsal*, ridiculed the unnatural use of expanded similes, when nothing but passion should be expressed, by these lines which are a parody upon some that Dryden wrote in the *Conquest of Granada* :

“ So boar and sow, when any storm is nigh,
Snuff up and smell it gath'ring in the sky :
Boar beckons sow to trot in chesnut groves,
And there consummate their unfinished loves ;
Pensive in mud they wallow all alone,
And snore and gruntle to each other's moan.”

How justly, also, might the following simile in this tragedy be ridiculed: a simile which *Edwina* breaks out into, when, after a struggle, she reconciles herself to the departure of her lover. Let him go, she exclaims, I can only die, and when I am gone, his fame shall be immortal :

So when the bleak and wintry tempest rends
The mantling ivy from the worshipp'd sides
Of some aspiring tower, where late it hung;
The stately mass, as with a sullen scorn,
From its proud height looks down upon the wreck,
And disencumber'd from its feeble guest,
Bares its broad bosom and defies the storm.

Is this the language of nature? Would any woman, whose heart was bursting at the dread thought of her lover's departure for the field of battle, solace herself with such frigid declamation? Do we find any such coldly artificial talking, in the characters of Constance, Desdemona, Juliet, or Belvidera, when they are labouring with their griefs? Produce me one such unnatural soliloquy in them, and I will consent that Cumberland has been faithful to the genuine workings of the human heart. I will consent, also, that the following rant of *Edgar* is the language of nature:

By heav'n I love thee
More than the sun burnt earth loves softening showers,
More than new ransom'd captives love the day;
Or dying martyrs breathing forth their souls,
The acclamations of whole hosts of angels.

I will not protract this discussion by extracting

all that occurs to me as either ludicrous, or turgid, or mean. Yet I will select two or three more instances in justification of the opinion I have expressed, (if it can possibly require a further one) and because they are such as may provoke the reader's smiles, if he be not a second Cassius.

I question if the most profound inquirer into the works of nature, ever beheld, or heard of, a phenomenon like the following :

Power supreme !

Whose words can bid the gathering clouds disperse,
And chain the stubborn and contentious winds,
When they unseat the everlasting rocks,
And cast them to the sky.

I am not quite certain whether Miss Edgeworth would not admit these lines into the next edition of her *Irish Bulls*. To *unseat everlasting rocks*, appears to me to contain an idea just as philosophically accurate as the following couplet of Pope:

When first young Maro, in his boundless mind,
A work to *outlast immortal Rome* design'd.

Of new and appropriate metaphors, expressed with a happy felicity of style, the following may serve as a specimen :

Once I was happy :

Clear and serene my life's calm current ran
While scarce a *breezy wish* provok'd its tide ;
Down the smooth *flood* the *tuneful passions* fell
In easy lapse, and slumber'd as they pass'd.

From this it may be concluded that they

were somnambulists, for their progressive motion was not hindered by sleep.

One more instance and I have done. Matilda informs her train, that on the following morning they must employ themselves in singing, to the harp, songs of victory : and this she very pointedly enforces by observing, that “ they must *teach their throats* a loftier strain.” Now the throat is certainly the organ of sound, and it may be taught how to emit tones harmoniously ; but if a metonymy can ever be advantageously employed, I think it might have been so here.

I will not stop to detect other blemishes, such as making his characters eruditely familiar with classical learning, and especially the Lady *Matilda*. She talks as fluently of Jove, and Minerva, and Apollo, and Janus, as the author’s grandfather could have done ; nay, I question whether Lady Jane Grey herself, in the plenitude of that knowledge which so astonished honest Roger Ascham, could have exhibited a more commendable proficiency. These acquisitions are remarkable only when we consider the era in which the action of the play is laid ; and when, as far as I know, the study of heathen mythology or the Roman poets was not much cultivated in this island. A poet, to be sure, whose imagination is very fervid, may outstrip the tardy pace of time, and exhibit, as the customs of the eleventh century, what belongs to

the fifteenth. Shakspeare has done this, and why not Cumberland?

A spirit of candour, which, though a rare quality in a critic, is one that becomes him more than the most acute severity, induces me to copy the following lines from this tragedy, describing the death of *Harold*, and in which the reader will find a vigour and animation somewhat remarkable in a writer whose tragic style was so peculiarly feeble without delicacy, or turgid without strength. Had he written always thus, I had been spared the trouble of following him through his inflated imbecility, and the reader would have escaped the perusal of my pursuit.

Matilda inquires the issue of the battle, and *Edgar* answers :

Hearken :

The hireling troops had fled ; one native phalanx
 Fatally brave, yet stood ; there deep engulf'd,
 Within the Norman host I found thy father,
 Mounted like Mars upon a pile of slain :
 Frowning he fought, and wore his helmet up,
 His batter'd harness at each ghastly sluice
 Streaming, with blood : life gush'd at every vein,
 Yet liv'd he, as in proud despight of nature,
 His mighty soul unwilling to forsake
 Its princely dwelling : swift as thought I flew,
 And as a sturdy churl his pole-axe aim'd
 Full at the hero's crest, I sprung upon him,
 And sheath'd my rapier in the caitiff's throat.

Matilda. Didst thou ? then art thou faithful. Open wide
 And shower your blessings on his head, ye heavens.

Edgar. Awhile the fainting hero we upheld ;

(For Edwin now had join'd me) : but as well
We might have driven the mountain cataract
Back to its sources, as stemm'd the battle's tide.
I saw the imperial Duke, and with loud insults
Provok'd him to the combat : but in vain ;
The pursey braggart now secure of conquest
Rein'd in his steed, and wing'd his squadron round
To cut us from retreat : cold death had stopp'd
Thy father's heart ; e'en hope itself had died :
Midst showers of darts we bore him from the field,
And now, supported on his soldier's pikes,
The venerable ruin comes.

Every thing is great or mean only by comparison ; and it is only by comparing Cumberland with himself that this passage can deserve applause. Thus compared, however, it has merit ; and slender as it is, its value can be appreciated only by him whose fate it has been to read the tragedy through, and to whom this parting gleam is like the farewell lustre of the setting sun in November after a dull and foggy day. I will now dismiss this play with two questions ; if Sheridan laughed at it, who can blame him ? and if it were possible for an author to judge his own works dispassionately, could Cumberland have said of it, “ that it is better *written* than planned ? ”

While it is acknowledged, however, that the production of a good tragedy demands the exercise of very exalted talents, it must also be confessed that it is no difficult task to ridicule the efforts which we cannot surpass, and which sometimes we cannot

even equal. Sheridan's delicacy of taste and correctness of judgment, might easily lead him to perceive the deficiencies of Cumberland's tragedy in all the true requisites of that species of writing; and his powers of satire enabled him to expose those deficiencies with exquisite ridicule. But what was his own success when he tasked his genius to a similar undertaking; when he endeavoured to engraft, upon the bastard stock of Kotzebue, the vigorous shoots of his own imagination? Pizarro stands a memorable instance of the triumph of show and splendid declamation, united with the temporary feelings of politics, over the genuine dictates of sound taste and reason. I know it has been attempted by the friends and admirers of Mr. Sheridan, to insinuate that we are indebted to Kotzebue for all that is contemptible in Pizarro, and to Sheridan for all that is excellent. Slender as this praise is, for how little in Pizarro can be pronounced excellent when contemplated without the adjuncts of scenic representation, still I must dispute Sheridan's claim to it. I have examined the original German dramas, out of which Pizarro has been compounded, and the impression upon my mind is, that Sheridan has not very much improved what he has taken. He has produced a tragedy which I am inclined to think even Cumberland would have disowned, and he has succeeded even less than Cumberland would have done. Let us not forget, therefore, when we

see the author of the *Battle of Hastings* bending beneath the lash of the *Critic*, that the hand which inflicts the punishment has committed the same error.

Shortly after the performance of this tragedy, Cumberland's first patron and master, the Earl of Halifax, died. His character of him has already been given. He was succeeded in his office, as secretary for the colonial department, by Lord George Germain, a nobleman to whom Cumberland was totally unknown, and from whom, therefore, he could expect but few services. He prepared himself, consequently, to retain contentedly his subordinate office of clerk of the reports, though he had previously been in treaty, under the friendly auspices of Lord Clare, with Mr. Pownall for the secretaryship. The nomination of Lord George Germain, however, left him but little hopes of completing that negotiation, so frigidly precise and formal was his lordship's reception of Cumberland upon his first introduction to him after his accession to office.

From this state of contented apathy, however, he was soon agreeably roused. One day, as his lordship was leaving the office, he suddenly relaxed from his austerity of manner, and very courteously invited him to pass a few days with him and his family at Stoneland near Tunbridge Wells. This invitation happened to be delivered in so subdued a tone of voice

that it was not very distinctly heard by Cumberland, and so little had he taught himself to expect any such distinction from his lordship, that he doubted whether he had accurately understood any part of what was addressed to him. To resolve his doubts, he applied to his lordship's confidential secretary, who admitted the likelihood of the invitation, but expressed some apprehensions as to the propriety of accepting it. Cumberland partly participated in these apprehensions, but he adopted the only method of ascertaining their justness. He visited Lord George, and was received by him with a friendly cordiality, which "day by day improved, and which no one word or action of his life to come ever for an instant interrupted or diminished." * The almost immediate consequence of that friendship was, the attainment of his object with regard to the secretaryship. His lordship had heard of Cumberland's endeavours to effect a negociation with Mr. Pownall, by which he was to give him a certain compensation for his place, but the new favourite was now told he should have the place without giving any consideration for it. Mr. Pownall's willingness to retire was, of course, implied in his disposition to sell his office to a successor, and Lord George Germain informed him one day, that his Majesty was pleased to accept his resignation, and had also appointed Cumberland to succeed him. All stipulation was positively forbidden, and Cumber-

land took his seat at the table as secretary to the board. He could not do less than express his very deep sense of obligation to Lord George Germain, for this act of patronage and kindness, and his lordship replied, that if Cumberland was as happy in receiving the appointment as he had been in communicating it to him, he was then very happy indeed.

Cumberland now found himself secure in the possession of an office, whose emoluments were, at least, adequate to all the necessities of life, to many of its comforts, and to some of its luxuries. He did not indeed enjoy it long, for, upon the dissolution of Lord North's administration, the Board of Trade was abolished, and Cumberland lost his place. He might have said as Gibbon did, who was one of the Lords Commissioners, "that he was stripped of a convenient salary." Cumberland, however, like the historian, resorted to his pen, though with a degree of success very different. To Lord George Germain he continued ardently attached during the whole period of his lordship's life, and often alleviated the burthen of his official duties, by taking to himself as large a share of them as he could, without appearing to encroach upon the business of others. There was, indeed, some merit in this undisguised devotion to the interests of his lordship, for at that period he was rather an unpopular character, and they who advocated his cause had to encounter some

of the strongest and most irreconcilable prejudices of mankind ; and Cumberland justly observes, in reference to his own *active* friendship, that there “ is a middle kind of way which some men can hit off between doing all and doing nothing, which saves appearances and satisfies easy consciences ;” but that lukewarmness of disposition never, I believe, formed any part of Cumberland’s character.

CHAP. XVI.

Cumberland produces the Opera of CALYPSO.—And afterwards he WIDOW OF DELPHI.—Exerts himself in behalf of the unfortunate PERREAU.—Solicited to do the same for Dr. DODD, but declines when he hears that JOHNSON undertook his cause.—Anecdotes of LORD RODNEY.—A maxim of that gallant Admiral's.—Lines addressed to LORD MANSFIELD, by Cumberland, in reference to a transaction of RODNEY'S.

IN 1779 Cumberland produced the opera of *Calypso*, of which the dedication, to the Duchess of Manchester, is elegantly encomiastic. The opera itself requires little notice. *Telemachus* and *Mentor* singing songs is something too much ; it is as bad as Garrick's alteration of Shakspeare's *Tempest*, in which all the characters were degraded to the mummery of musical recitative. The images, in this piece, are sufficiently classical, and the poetry is a little above the ordinary level of such compositions : but, like the *Battle of Hastings*, it is compounded of shreds and patches, stolen from all sources. These thefts, however, I do not mean to detect, as I have those in the tragedy : it is enough to allude to them : the fact will require no voucher.

The music to this opera was composed by Mr. Butler, and Cumberland speaks of it with high encomiums: but it was never published. Butler also composed the airs for another opera which Cumberland produced the ensuing season, entitled, *The Widow of Delphi, or the Descent of the Deities*, of which, had the author printed it, I question if it would be necessary to say any more than thus to record the period of its performance. They both experienced a very brief existence; nor can I think that it would be advantageous to the managers, or agreeable to the public, as the author insinuates, that Calypso should be revived, eminent as the vocal performers on the stage now are.

Of the *Widow of Delphi* Cumberland says, "that having had it many years in his hands, by the frequent revisions and corrections which he has had opportunities of giving to the manuscript, he is encouraged to believe that if he, or any after him, shall send it into the world, that drama will be considered as one of his most classical and creditable productions." With what propriety this opinion is expressed, I am necessarily unable to say; but from the instances which I have already had of Cumberland's mode of estimating his own productions, I am apprehensive that the publication of this opera would not corroborate the author's notions of its excellence.

About this period he engaged in a cause honourable to his benevolence. The defence which

was read at the bar by the unfortunate Perreau was drawn up by Cumberland, and though it failed to preserve his life, the kindness with which he exerted himself in his behalf deserves equally to be commended. Garrick, who was present when this defence was read, spoke with enthusiasm of its excellence in the company of Cumberland, not knowing him to be the writer: the applause of such a man was motive enough for an author's vanity to disclose the secret, but Cumberland was silent, and Garrick, who confidently, though, as the event proved, untruly predicted that it had saved the prisoner's life, discovered afterwards that he had unconsciously extolled its superiority in the presence of the author.

The impression which this performance had excited was probably the reason why, at a subsequent period, Cumberland was solicited by Dr. Dodd, to undertake his defence in a similar manner: but when he heard that so potent an advocate as Dr. Johnson was preparing to step forth in his cause, he prudently retired from the field, "convinced," says he, "that if the powers of Johnson could not move mercy to reach his lamentable case, there was no further hope in man."

During the time that he acted in subordination to Lord George Germain, he was distinguished by that nobleman with peculiar marks of his favour and approbation. He was frequently at his table, and met there, of course, many of the most eminent

political characters of the time. Among those who partook of his lordship's hospitality was the gallant Rodney, with whom Cumberland was already intimate, and to whom he had an opportunity, through the interest of his patron, of doing some essential services.

He had been acquainted with Rodney in early life, and was the means of obtaining for him the command of that squadron, which, on its passage to the West Indies, captured the Spanish fleet fitted out for the Caraccas. But he has fallen into an important error, in ascribing to Admiral Rodney the merit of having first discovered that system of naval tactics which has created a new era in the history of our maritime exploits; I mean the practice of breaking the enemy's line—a practice which Rodney certainly first commenced, and which has since been so nobly pursued by our Nelsons, our Duncans, and our Howes; but the invention of which, extraordinary as it may seem, belongs solely and unequivocally to a man who was not only not bred to the sea, but who actually never performed a single voyage in his whole life. This person was Mr. Clerk, of Edinburgh, whose recent death has excited the regret of every one who was able to appreciate the value of talents and virtue united.

In the first volume of his Memoirs, Cumberland

mentions a circumstance which took place one day at Lord George Germain's table, and which led him into the opinion that Admiral Rodney was the inventor of the practice alluded to. That gallant officer had been asking a variety of questions as to the operation of infantry lines, when he proceeded to arrange a number of cherry-stones on the table, forming them into the likeness of two fleets drawn up in opposition to each other, and declaring that he was determined to pierce the enemy's line-of-battle ships just in that manner, (exhibiting the mode with his cherry-stones), if it should ever be his good fortune to bring them into action. The thing was not thought very practicable by the company present, but the idea had got fast hold of the admiral's mind, and he continued to manœuvre his cherry-stones with so much anticipated success, that he at last exclaimed, with the confidence of a man sure of his process, that he would lay the French admiral's flag at his sovereign's feet, a declaration which he afterwards made to the king in person, and actually fulfilled.

Such is the substance of the facts as communicated by Cumberland; and in the absence of all other evidence they might certainly be allowed no inconsiderable weight of credibility. Other evidence, however, is attainable, and I cannot better occupy a page or two of this work than by

diffusing the knowledge of those circumstances, which have so greatly contributed to our present naval superiority ; a superiority upon which our safety as a nation may be said almost to depend, for, while it exhibits an instance of maritime greatness unparalelled in the history of the world, it secures to the unapproachable shores of England a bulwark and defence which bid a proud defiance to the overwhelming legions of the tyrant of Europe.

Mr. Clerk printed the first part of his *Essay on Naval Tactics* in 1782, and the circulation of it was confined almost entirely to a few of his most intimate friends. Three other parts, illustrating his discoveries, were successively published ; and in 1804 the whole work was given to the world in an entire form, with a preface explaining the origin and progress of the author's plans. In an introduction, written in October 1781, it is observed, that during the greater part of the American war, and the whole of the two preceding wars, British sailors, in the rencontre of single ships, or of small squadrons, never failed to display the most skilful seamanship, as well as the most consummate bravery ; but, that wherever large fleets of ten, twenty, or thirty ships, had met, and formed in a line of battle, nothing memorable had been achieved. The truth of this general position was not disproved by some partial

instances of success, where the English force uniformly possessed a decided superiority in point of numbers; and when it was observed, that the intrepidity and skill of English seamen were never frustrated in contests where the opposing ships were few and dispersed, Mr. Clerk was led to the very obvious conclusion, that the French must have introduced some change into their naval system, of which we were not aware. What this change was he endeavoured to detect, and he very successfully proved that it consisted in the enemy taking a leeward position to wait for our attack from the windward. The manifest advantage of this practice, where large fleets have to bear down from windward, in a combined operation, is demonstrated by Mr. Clerk, in a series of minute details, for which the reader must consult the original work. The principal superiority which the enemy derived from it was, that while they were coolly waiting our attack, they were able to disable us in our approach; and when we had assumed a situation for close encounter, they might bear away at intervals, while enveloped in smoke, or by making more sail, might shoot a-head and pour all their fire into the opposite van, as they passed and wore in succession to form a new line to leeward on the opposite tack, where, if the enemy were not already disabled, the same manœuvre might be repeated with the same success.

That such was the system adopted by the French, is illustrated by the details of a variety of naval engagements from Admiral Byng's in the Mediterranean in 1756, to Admiral Greaves's rencontre off the Chesapeake in 1781; and Mr. Clerk next proceeds to shew, that whenever the French, in opposition to their usual practice, kept to windward, that then, as if aware of the peculiar danger of their situation, they were careful never to make the attack themselves. This fact was also proved by a reference to particular engagements. Such, therefore, was our naval situation in the beginning of the year 1782, when the first part of this work appeared, and Mr. Clerk would have been entitled to no mean applause if he had merely developed this concealed system of tactics on the part of the French, which had eluded the sagacity and penetration of our officers engaged in actual service. But he not only discovered the danger, he also taught us how to meet it; and the system which he substituted possessed this peculiar merit, that it could not avail our enemies even when divulged, unless their seamen could likewise be taught the matchless skill and lion-hearted courage of a British sailor. Without going into details too copious for this place, it may be observed, that Mr. Clerk's discovery consisted simply in cutting the enemy's line, whether the attack was made from the windward or the leeward. The

glorious result of this system need not be dwelt upon ; but, in order to shew that Lord Rodney was indebted to the suggestions of Mr. Clerk for his knowledge of it, and that it did originate with himself, the following extract from that gentleman's preface shall be here introduced :

“ In January 1780, when I was in London, being fully impressed with the importance of the naval ideas which long had been working in my imagination, and in consequence of the strictures on Lord Keppel's engagement sent the year before, some appointments, for the purpose of further communications on this subject, were made by my friends. Among the first of these was an appointment with Mr. Richard Atkinson, the particular friend of Sir George Rodney, who was then in London, and was immediately to set out to take the command of the fleet in the West Indies. At this meeting the whole of my acquisitions on the subject of naval tactics, for many years back, was discussed. I communicated to Mr. Atkinson the theories of attack from both the windward and the leeward ; the first as contained in the first part of this essay ; the last as contained in the second part, now published a second time. I particularly explained my doctrine of cutting the enemy's line, &c. as set forth in both first and second parts. I also produced the paper of strictures on Lord Keppel's rencontre of the 27th of

July, which contained all my general ideas on the subject of naval tactics. All this Mr. Atkinson undertook to communicate to Sir George Rodney, which he could have no difficulty in doing, as I left in his custody sketches, made according to my usual method of demonstration, together with the necessary explanations.

“From the best authority I have been informed, that Lord Rodney himself at all times acknowledged the communication ; and having, from the first, approved of the system, declared, even before he left London, that he would strictly adhere to it in fighting the enemy.”

We are further informed by Mr. Clerk, that Lord Rodney, when he arrived in England, did not hesitate to acknowledge that he had received from him the first suggestions of those manœuvres by which he gained the victory of the 12th of April, 1782 ; and it is very probable that his arrangement of the cherry-stones at Lord George Germain's, was nothing more than a mimic illustration of those principles that had been communicated to him by Mr. Clerk, a conclusion which Cumberland himself seems disposed to admit in the *Supplement* to his *Memoirs*.

It was a maxim with Lord Rodney, which deserves to be recorded, never to embarrass the strict line of his duty by any political considerations of what parties prevailed, or what were dismissed ; a

maxim which might be advantageously adopted by some men now in the service, who confound the duties of their station by mixing in all the petty intrigues of faction. "Our naval officers," said Rodney, "have nothing to do with parties and politics, being simply bound to carry their instructions into execution, to the best of their abilities, without deliberating about men and measures, which forms no part of their duty, and for which they are in no degree responsible." These are the arguments of a superior mind which clearly conceives its object, and accomplishes it by open, manly, and direct means.

With Lord Mansfield, Cumberland was familiarly intimate, and to him he addressed the following pleasing lines, in allusion to his recall on a change of ministers :—

To the Earl of Mansfield.

Shall merit find no shelter but the grave,
And envy still pursue the wise and brave?
Sticks the leech close to life, and only drops
When its food fails and the heart's current stops?
Though sculptur'd laurels grace the hero's bust,
And tears are mingled with the poet's dust,
Review their sad memorials, you will find
This fell by faction, that in mis'ry pin'd.

When France and Spain the subject ocean swept,
Whilst Britons' tame inglorious lion slept,
Or lashing up his courage now and then,
Turn'd out and growl'd, and then turn'd in again,
Rodney in that ill-omen'd hour arose,
Crush'd his own first, and next his country's foes;
Though all that fate allow'd was nobly won,
Envy could squint at something still undone;

Injurious faction stript him of command,
 And snatch'd the helm from his victorious hand,
 Summon'd the nation's brave defender home,
 Prejudg'd his cause and warn'd him to his doom ;
 Whilst hydra-headed malice open'd wide
 Her thousand mouths, and bay'd him till he died.

The poet's cause comes next—and you my Lord,
 The Muse's friend, will take a poet's word ;
 Trust me our province is replete with pain ;
 They say we're irritable, envious, vain :
 They say—and Time has varnish'd o'er the lie
 Till it assumes Truth's venerable dye—
 That wits, like falcons soaring for their prey,
 Pounce every wing that flutters in their way,
 Plunder each rival songster's tuneful breast
 To deck with others plumes their own dear nest ;
 They say—but 'tis an office I disclaim
 To brush their cobwebs from the roll of fame,
 There let the spider hang and work his worst,
 And spin his flimsy venom till he burst ;
 Reptiles beneath the holiest shrine may dwell,
 And toads engender in the purest well.

Genius must pay its tax like other wares
 According to the value which it bears ;
 On sterling worth detraction's stamp is laid,
 As gold before 'tis current is assay'd.
 Fame is a debt time present never pays,
 But leaves it on the score to future days ;
 And why is restitution thus deferr'd
 Of long arrears from year to year incurr'd ?
 Why to posterity this labour given
 To search out frauds and set defaulters even ?
 If our sons hear our praise 'tis well, and yet
 Praise in the father's ear had sounded sweet.

Still there is one exception we must own,
 Whom all conspire to praise, and one alone ;
 One on whose living brow we plant the wreath,
 And almost deify on this side death :
 He in the plaudits of the present age
 Already reads his own historic page.

And, though preëminence is under heav'n
 The last of crimes by man to be forgiv'n,
 Justice her own vice-gerent will defend,
 The orphan's father and the widow's friend ;
 Truth, virtue, genius mingle beams so bright,
 Envy is dazzl'd with excess of light ;
 Detraction's tongue scarce stammers out a fault,
 And faction blushes for its own assault.
 His the happy gift, the nameless grace,
 That shapes and fits the man to every place,
 The gay companion at the social board,
 The guide of councils, or the senate's lord,
 Now regulates the law's discordant strife,
 Now balances the scale of death or life,
 Sees guilt engendering in the human heart,
 And strips from falsehood's face the mask of art.
 Whether, assembled with the wise and great,
 He stands the pride and pillar of the state,
 With well-weigh'd argument distinct and clear
 Confirms the judgment and delights the ear,
 Or in the festive circle deigns to sit
 Attempering wisdom with the charms of wit—
 Blest talent, form'd to profit and to please,
 To clothe Instruction in the garb of Ease,
 Sublime to rise, or graceful to descend,
 Now save an empire and now cheer a friend.

More I could add, but you perhaps complain,
 And call it mere creation of the brain ;
 Poets you say will flatter—true, they will ;
 But I nor inclination have nor skill—
 Where is your model, you will ask me, where ?
 Search your own breast, my Lord, you'll find it there.

CHAP. XVII.

Cumberland departs upon his Spanish Mission.—

A brief recapitulation of that affair.—Its importance now necessarily weakened.—Exalts a gale into a storm.—Fails in his undertaking.—Ignorance of an ecclesiastic.—Cumberland vain of the notice he received from the royal family of Spain.—The society he kept at Madrid.—Account of TIRANNA, the celebrated actress.—Cumberland recalled.—Lord HILLSBOROUGH'S Letter.—Reflections upon Cumberland's account of this business.—Insincerity of the English government towards him.—Refuses an indemnification from the King of Spain.—The whole transaction involved in mystery.—The dangers of a pinch of snuff in Spain.

THE progress of my narrative has now brought me to the most remarkable period of Cumberland's life, that when he accepted the mission to Spain which, in its consequences, so little benefited his condition. His account of this business is written with every appearance of truth; his sincerity, indeed, had little to fear from temptation at that period of his existence when he sat down to compose his *Memoirs*: and he removed every ground of suspicion by a minute reference to dates and persons, by which any falsehood might easily have been detected. He firmly maintains his right to be credited, by the solemn disavowal which he makes of every intention to deceive; and as his relation

has remained uncontradicted either by public or private testimony, that right must be willingly acknowledged.

It appears, that in the year 1780, he possessed some means of secretly knowing the intrigues which were carrying on between the courts of France and Spain, through their confidential agents in this country, who were in correspondence with its avowed enemies. How he acquired this knowledge he does not communicate ; but I am willing to hope it was without any dishonourable practices. When it *was* obtained, however, he thought it his duty to impart it to the government, and the result was that a secret negociation might probably be opened with the minister Florida Blanca. With this negociation Cumberland was intrusted, and he soon departed for Lisbon, with his wife and family. Here he was to remain till he ascertained the propriety of going forward to his ultimate destination, or the necessity of returning without accomplishing his errand. He was to be governed in either of these determinations by the nature of the advices which he should receive from the Abbe Hussey, chaplain to his Catholic Majesty, who was to proceed to Aranjuez, and to communicate with Cumberland upon the posture of affairs.

He took his family with him, that his real object might be the better concealed, and that while ostensibly travelling into Italy upon a passport through the Spanish dominions, he might, in

effect, fulfil the object of his journey, whatever it was.

Having received his necessary papers and instructions from the Earl of Hillsborough, on the 17th of April, 1780, he repaired to Portsmouth, where a frigate was prepared for conveying him to Lisbon; and on the 28th he set sail. His adventures on the passage he has related with an ostentatious display of nautical terms, and magnified some ordinary occurrences into a tale of terror, very pardonable in a man whose nerves were weak, and whose acquaintance with maritime affairs had hitherto been confined to crossing and recrossing the Irish sea.

I shall not follow him, however, either through his technical phraseology, or his romantic relation of a brisk gale, which swells into an awful storm, in his description, but inform the reader that he arrived very safe at Lisbon on the 16th of May, having, indeed, had an action with a French frigate, which was captured, and the operations of which must have been sufficiently impressive to one unfamiliar with them. His account of this matter, however, is very meagre, as if all his powers had been exhausted upon the storm; but he wrote a song of triumph on the occasion, which was often sung in full chorus by the crew after they arrived at Lisbon. I shall omit it here; for it has nothing to recommend it but sea terms, and a style perfectly suitable to those for whom it was intended.

The Abbè Hussey immediately departed for Aranjuez, and soon wrote to Cumberland advising him to proceed on his journey into Spain, *to give the negotiation a trial*, but he did not express himself with much confidence as to its success. How to act, upon such slender motives for proceeding, was what Cumberland could not immediately resolve; but he finally adopted the advice of Mr. Hussey, and prepared for entering Spain. He communicated his intention to Lord Hillsborough, in a letter, of which it may be said, as of all the despatches preserved in the *Memoirs*, that it was more the laboured and involved production of a literary man, than the simple, brief, and explicit statement of one possessed with the distinct conceptions of business. It is too verbose, and while it wanders into nice distinctions upon the motives of human action, it tells too little of what the minister would most wish to know.

Cumberland set forth, however, and soon experienced the miseries of travelling in Portugal and Spain. Had Shenstone been of either country he never would have written his well known lines on the comforts and luxuries of an inn, and, least of all, would he have told the melancholy truth which the following stanza contains :

Whoe'er has travelled life's dull round,
Where'er his stages may have been,
May sigh to think he still has found
The warmest welcome at an inn.

The wretched accommodations of the *posadas* is well known to all who have read the accounts of any travellers into these countries, and Cumberland seems to have suffered them, at least, with as little patience as any man could do. The details of his journey I shall not recapitulate, but I may observe, that they possess at present, brief as they are, an accidental value from the deplorable condition in which both those nations are now placed by the abhorred ambition of the most detested scourge that ever cursed mankind. There are few of the places mentioned by Cumberland in his progress from Lisbon to Aranjuez, whose names have not been recently familiarised to us by the exploits of our gallant countrymen, of whom it may be confidently predicted, that whatever issue it may please the great Disposer of all events to grant to our endeavours, the memory of their deeds will be revered in after ages with the same enthusiasm that we now mention the plain of Marathon or the field of Cressy. The illustrious hero, too, who guides our armies, and who has hitherto exhibited a combination of skill in projecting his measures, of prudence in conducting them, and of promptitude in the moment of action or of danger, unsurpassed in the annals of our own country, and probably of any other, will be delivered down to posterity in the fair catalogue of those whose greatness was achieved in the path of duty and true glory.

Shortly after Cumberland's arrival at Aranjuez,

he was admitted to an interview with the minister Count Florida Blanca, and if we may judge of the character of his mission, from the mysterious precautions with which he was received, it must have been one of singular peril. He always visited this minister by night, and was ushered in by his confidential domestic, through a suite of five rooms, the doors of each being immediately locked when he had passed through. Thus impenetrably closetted, he commenced his operations, and with such auspicious beginning that he considered them prosperously advancing to a successful conclusion, when the riots, which disturbed London in the year 1780, being known at Madrid, (for an account of them was regularly transmitted to the Spanish court by their ambassador at Paris, Count d'Aranda) interposed an obstruction at so critical a juncture, that it was never afterwards possible to bring the matter to a similar point of propitious maturity. The tumults of the British metropolis were magnified into an actual rebellion, and it was thought impolitic at Madrid to enter into any negotiation with the agents of a government whose overthrow was hourly expected, and was, perhaps, hourly desired. Cumberland did all he could to counteract the unlucky effect of this intelligence, by assuring the ministers that these dissensions would soon be quieted, and that there was no danger to be apprehended in regard to the stability of the government. His predictions had the fate of Cassandra's. They were addressed to men who

were either weak enough to believe what was so improbable, or crafty enough to assume that belief as a pretext for delaying a business they were in no hurry to complete.

Cumberland had not the good fortune to please his employers, and he enters into a laboured vindication of himself, in the second volume of his *Memoirs*. No question can be justly understood if the testimonies on only one side be given; but, admitting that what Cumberland states is strictly true, I think there can be no doubt that he was censured by Lord Hillsborough, without sufficient cause. He seems to have acted with caution, when caution was required, and with vigor and promptitude when delay or timidity would have probably precipitated the ruin of his schemes. To excite the captious displeasure of a minister, however, has been the fate of abler negociators than Cumberland.

No interest can possibly attach, at this moment, to the detail of what Cumberland did, or what he did not do, in the capacity which he filled at the court of Madrid. To himself the recollection of that period must always have had an importance which it would necessarily lose in the eyes of others; nor do I blame him that he dwelled so copiously upon the transaction; it was the most memorable epoch of his life, and in him it was venial to be diffuse. The reader, however, is wearied before he gets through the pages that contain

his despatches to Lord Hillsborough, his conferences with Florida Blanca, his arrangements with Mr. Hussey, and his explanations of what should have been done at home, and what omitted. The time is gone by; the occasion that called him forth is forgotten; and neither hope nor fear is now excited by the prospects of his success or failure.

It will be prudent in me, therefore, not to encumber my pages with a recapitulation of what exhibits little else but tediousness in those of Cumberland; and it will suffice to add, that in February, 1781, his recall was signified to him by Lord Hillsborough, to which intimation he paid due obedience, and, travelling through Spain and France, in a state of great bodily debility from illness, reached England after an absence of about twelve months, during which nothing had been successfully accomplished.

But while I thus briefly dismiss the political details of his Spanish journey, I propose to dwell somewhat longer upon other topics connected with it, both as they concern Cumberland himself, and as they may be amusing or interesting to the reader. Wholly to omit these would be as culpable as in a biographer of Milton to relate only that he went to Italy and back again, without telling what befel him personally during his absence.

It betokens a lamentable state of society when the public teachers of religion have nothing but

bigotted zeal for their qualification, without that learning which discovers the path of truth, and that persuasion which leads man into it. When Cumberland visited the Escorial, the prior accompanied him in his examinations of whatever was curious and worthy of notice. Among other things he inquired about a manuscript, which was said to be some original letters of Brutus, written in Greek. These letters both Dr. Bentley and Sir John Dalrymple had mentioned, and Cumberland found them, upon examination, manifestly spurious. The prior thought so too ; but the reasons of his belief were sufficiently curious. They could not be the true letters of Brutus he said, because they professed to be written after the death of Julius Cæsar, but it was well known that Brutus died before Julius Cæsar. Cumberland politely endeavoured to rectify this anachronism by hinting that it was generally believed Brutus was one of those conspirators who effected the assassination of Cæsar. The prior allowed that such a rumour was rather prevalent, but he hastened into his cell, and produced a large folio volume of chronology, where that idea was fully proved to be erroneous. With such an antagonist Cumberland forebore to contend ; but what a picture does it exhibit of the keeper of a royal library, and a professor of the learned languages !

What little he has said of the Escorial may be passed over in silence. We know enough of this

singular building from other travellers, who either examined it more leisurely, or had more inclination to describe it.

He seems to dwell with peculiar complacency upon every mark of attention which he received from the royal family during his residence in Spain. They distinguished him, indeed, in a manner sufficiently flattering to his feelings, whether it arose from any personal regard for him, from any consideration of his country, or from an urbanity of conduct, natural to those illustrious personages. The king permitted him to select two of the finest chargers from his stud, as a present to his own sovereign, and the Prince of Asturias condescended to change the arrangements of a room which had been furnished in the Chinese style, in compliance with his observations. These marks of consideration were sufficient to gratify vanity, and Cumberland tells of them with a minuteness which shews that his vanity was gratified. They were not, indeed, all which he received ; but the reader can dispense with an ampler detail ; they were no less gracious in the donors than pleasing to the receiver. We are told, indeed, that the queen took the pattern of his daughter's riding-habits, and that she " put broad gold lace round the bottom of the skirt," and that " she sent for several other articles of their dress as samples."

Of the society which he either found or made in Madrid, he does not say much. He gives an

account how one day was passed, and he represents that as an accurate specimen of all the rest. It was an interchange of ceremonies, I imagine, rather than of friendship or of conversation.

He relates a pleasing anecdote of Count Kaunitz (son of the imperial minister), who was ambassador to the court of Spain at the same time that Cumberland was upon his mission there. When Cumberland was at the Spanish theatre one night, shortly after his arrival at Madrid, witnessing the exhibition of a comedy that "seemed to be grounded upon the story of Richardson's Pamela," this nobleman entered the same box, and placed himself at the back seat. There happened to be, in the play, a character which was meant to personate a British naval officer. When he made his appearance on the stage, it was with so little resemblance of the original either in dress or manner, that Cumberland could not but smile at the awkward imitation, which Count Kaunitz perceiving, leaned forwards and addressed him in the following elegant and courteous manner: "I hope, Sir, you will overlook a small mistake in point of costume, which this gentleman has very naturally fallen into, as I am convinced he would have been proud of presenting himself to you in his proper uniform, could he have found among all his naval acquaintance any one who could have furnished him with a sample of it." This ingenious remark led to a conversation that terminated in an inti-

macy between the Count and Cumberland, which was uninterrupted but by the departure of the latter.

Among those who used to frequent his evening circle at home Cumberland enumerates, besides Count Kaunitz, (who subsequently formed an attachment to his eldest daughter, but died, soon after, at Barcelona), Signior Giusti, an Italian, secretary of the embassy; General Count Pallavicini, the Nuncio Colonna, cardinal elect, the Venetian Ambassador, those of Saxony and Denmark, Colonel O'Moore of the Walloons, Signior Nicholas Marchetti, and some of the heads of religious fraternities.

In this society he represents himself as passing his time with tolerable ease and gratification; and he was inclined to estimate it the more highly, perhaps, because he could not weaken the pleasures which it afforded, by any that could be obtained by external search. Amusements were few in Madrid, and those few not much suited to a foreign taste. The theatre, which is a common centre of attraction in every country, was here reduced to a state of meanness which could only excite contempt. It was "small, dark, ill-furnished, and ill attended." Yet, it had one attraction, and that one powerful beyond what any other theatre in Europe possessed. This was the performances of the celebrated *Tiranna*, as she was called, a wonderful tragic actress, of whom Cumberland gives the following interesting account:

“ That extraordinary woman, whose real name I do not remember, and whose real origin cannot be traced, till it is settled from what particular nation or people we are to derive the outcast race of gypsies, was not less formed to strike beholders with the beauty and commanding majesty of her person, than to astonish all that heard her, by the powers that nature and art had combined to give her. My friend Count Pietra Santa, who had honourable access to this great stage-heroine, intimated to her the very high expectation I had formed of her performances, and the eager desire I had to see her in one of her capital characters, telling her at the same time that I had been a writer for the stage in my own country; in consequence of this intimation she sent me word that I should have notice from her when she wished me to come to the theatre, till when she desired I would not present myself in my box upon any night, though her name might be in the bill, for it was only when she liked her part, and was in the humour to play well, that she wished me to be present.

“ In obedience to her message I waited several days, and at last received the looked-for summons; I had not been many minutes in the theatre before she sent a mandate to me to go home, for that she was in no disposition that evening for playing well, and should neither do justice to her own talents, nor to my expectations. I instantly obeyed this whimsical injunction, knowing it to

be so perfectly in character with the capricious humour of her tribe. When something more than a week had passed, I was again invited to the theatre, and permitted to sit out the whole representation. I had not then enough of the language to understand much more than the incidents and action of the play, which was of the deepest cast of tragedy, for in the course of the plot she murdered her infant children, and exhibited them dead on the stage, lying on each side of her, whilst she, sitting on the bare floor between them, (her attitude, action, features, tones, defying all description), presented such a high-wrought picture of hysteric phrensy, *laughing wild amidst severest woe*, as placed her in my judgment at the very summit of her art; in fact I have no conception that the powers of acting can be carried higher; and such was the effect upon the audience, that whilst the spectators in the pit, having caught a kind of sympathetic phrensy from the scene, were rising up in a tumultuous manner, the word was given out by authority for letting fall the curtain, and a catastrophe, probably too strong for exhibition, was not allowed to be completed.

“A few minutes had passed, when this wonderful creature, led in by Pietra Santa, entered my box; the artificial paleness of her cheeks, her eyes, which she had dyed of a bright vermillion round the edges of the lids, her fine arms bare to the shoulders, the wild magnificence of her attire, and

the profusion of her dishevelled locks, glossy black as the plumage of the raven, gave her the appearance of something so more than human, such a Sybil, such an imaginary being, so awful, so impressive, that my blood chilled as she approached me, not to ask but to claim my applause, demanding of me if I had ever seen any actress that could be compared with her in my own, or any other, country. ‘I was determined,’ she said, ‘to exert myself for you this night; and if the sensibility of the audience would have suffered me to have concluded the scene, I should have convinced you that I do not boast of my own performances without reason.’

“The allowances, which the Spanish theatre could afford to make to its performers, were so very moderate, that I should doubt if the whole year’s salary of the Tiranna would have more than paid for the magnificent dress, in which she then appeared; but this and all other charges appertaining to her establishment were defrayed from the coffers of the Duke of Osuna, a grandee of the first class, and commander of the Spanish guards. This noble person found it indispensably necessary for his honour, to have the finest woman in Spain upon his pension, but by no means necessary to be acquainted with her, and at the very time, of which I am now speaking, Pietra Santa seriously assured me, that his excellency had indeed paid large sums to her order, but had never once visited, or even

seen her. He told me, at the same time, that he had very lately taken upon himself to remonstrate upon this want of curiosity, and having suggested to his excellency how possible it was for him to order his equipage to the door, and permit him to introduce him to this fair creature, whom he knew only by report, and the bills she had drawn upon his treasurer, the duke graciously consented to my friend's proposal, and actually set out with him for the gallant purpose of taking a cup of chocolate with his hitherto invisible mistress, who had notice given her of the intended visit. The distance from the house of the grandee to the apartments of the gypsy was not great, but the lulling motion of the huge state-coach, and the softness of the velvet cushions had rocked his excellency into so sound a nap, that when his equipage stopped at the lady's door, there was not one of his retinue bold enough to undertake the invidious task of troubling his repose. The consequence was, that after a proper time was passed upon the halt for this brave commander to have waked, had nature so ordained it, the coach wheeled round, and his excellency having slept away his curiosity, had not, at the time when I left Madrid, ever cast his eyes upon the person of the incomparable Tiranna. I take for granted, my friend Pietra Santa drank the chocolate, and his excellency enjoyed the nap. I will only add, in confirmation of my anecdote, that the good Abbe Curtis, who had

the honour of having educated this illustrious sleeper, verified the fact."

Time passed on in the alternate amusements of beholding this extraordinary actress, and the company which frequented his evening circle, when the period of his recall arrived, and he prepared to obey the mandate of his sovereign. The letter from Lord Hillsborough, which communicated this command, is an accurate specimen of courtly politeness and studied coldness of address to an unsuccessful agent, and shall be here transcribed :

" Sir,

" St. James's, Feb. 14, 1781.

" I am sorry to find from your last letter, No. 19, and from that written from Count de Florida Blanca to Mr. Hussey, which the latter received at Lisbon, that an entire stop is put to the pleasing expectation, which had been formed from your residence in Spain. Had I been as well informed of the intentions of the court of Madrid, when you went abroad, as I now am, you would certainly not have had the trouble and fatigue of so long a voyage and journey.

" There remains nothing now for me but to acquaint you, that I am commanded by the king to signify to you his majesty's pleasure, that you do immediately return to England; when I say immediately, it is not intended that your departure should have the appearance of resentment, or that you should be deprived of the opportunity of ex-

pressing a just sense of the marks of civility and attention which Mr. Cumberland has received since his arrival in Madrid.

“ I am, with great truth and regard,

“ Sir,

“ Your most obedient

“ Humble servant,

(Signed) “ HILLSBOROUGH.”

Whether the failure of Cumberland's negotiation was to be attributed to himself, to the insincerity of the ministry, or to whatever other cause, cannot, as I have already observed, be with certainty known, while we have the testimony of only one person. In delivering this opinion I do not mean to infer the slightest suspicion of Cumberland's veracity ; but there is, as Lord Shaftesbury has justly observed, “ more of innocent delusion than voluntary imposture in the world, and they who have most imposed on mankind have been happy in a certain faculty, of imposing first upon themselves.” This sort of delusion, it is natural to suppose, every man is in danger of, when he reviews his own conduct, and seeks to justify his proceedings against the aspersions or insinuations of others. The operations of self-love are so subtle and so incessant, that we are in equal peril of submitting to their influence from their imperceptible and from their habitual action. To silence the voice of reproof within our own bosoms, is an art which we

are all willing to practise ; and that conduct which the eye of the world beholds with anger or disdain, we know how to trick forth in our imaginations, so as to make it acceptable to ourselves.

Every man is conscious that he has sometimes employed this kind of sophistry, and hence, whatever credibility is due to an individual, in testifying facts foreign to himself, the greatest caution may be justly used in receiving those by which his own proceedings are to be pronounced censurable, or otherwise. All the rough asperities are then softened down with admirable dexterity, and to ourselves we explain how events happened, why they were frustrated, and how they might have succeeded, with a disregard of truth, blameless only so far as it is unintentional.

Thus, in reading Cumberland's own account of his transactions in Spain, we find him doing every thing that could be done, yet failing, and incurring only the displeasure of his employers. Neither failure, however, nor the disapprobation of those under whom we act, are infallible criteria of right and wrong ; for the best schemes, however skilfully planned and conducted, may end in disappointment, and in the gratitude of the great we have no security for justice towards our actions. It too commonly happens, indeed, that we estimate the value of most things by their degrees of success, not reflecting how much merit may have been

displayed on occasions which terminate unfavourably. "As the most just and honourable enterprises," observes the sagacious Fletcher, of Sal-toun, "when they fail, are accounted in the number of rebellions ; so all attempts, however unjust, if they succeed, always purge themselves of all guilt and suspicion."

Though the truth of this maxim, however, may be extended to humbler events than rebellions, it does not hence follow that success alone can justify any measure ; nor, by a parity of reasoning can want of success be always a proof of want of judgment or of merit. We do not, indeed, find mankind uniformly judging so, and therefore, when a man fails in what he undertakes, while they who employed him, knowing the means he had of succeeding, consider his failure as the fit object of reproof, it would be at least rational to conclude, in the absence of all testimony on one side, and with only the unsupported affirmations of the accused on the other, that some grounds for displeasure actually existed familiar enough to those who were best able to know them.

Thus cautiously I wish to deliver my opinion upon the question of Cumberland's mission to Spain. He has himself discussed it with some degree of mystery ; its precise object is no where distinctly avowed, though it seems to have had some reference to a separate peace between that country

and England. Involved in such obscurity, nothing can be said of it more than what amounts to conjecture, and with a conjecture I leave it.

Cumberland was naturally solicitous to exculpate himself, but, to have done this effectually, he should have told with more candour what he had to perform, with what means he was provided, how much he actually performed, and how much it was impossible to accomplish. Had he done this, every reader would have been, to a certain degree, a competent judge of his case; but nothing positive or decisive can be concluded from the vague statements which he makes.

When Cumberland was preparing to depart from Madrid, he paid his farewell visit to the minister. What passed on that occasion is too honourable both to the Spanish monarch and to Cumberland, to be passed over without notice. He expressed the grateful sense he entertained of all the favours and attentions which his Catholic Majesty had condescended to shew towards him and his family, and Florida Blanca replied to these acknowledgments in the following manner, with a solemn and deliberate utterance, "as one who wished that a word should not be lost."

' Sir,—The king, my sovereign, has been entirely satisfied with every part of your conduct during the time you have resided among us. His majesty is convinced that you have done your

duty to your own court, and exerted yourself with sincere good will to promote that pacification which circumstances, out of your reach to foresee or to controul, seem for the present to have suspended. And now, Sir, you will be pleased to take in good part what I have to say to you with regard to your claims for indemnification, on the score of your expences, in which I have reason to apprehend you will find yourself abandoned and deceived by your employers. I have it therefore in command to tell you, that the king my sovereign, has taken this into his gracious consideration, and tenders to you, through me, full and ample compensation for all expences, which you have incurred by your coming into Spain; being unwilling that a gentleman, who has resorted to his court, and put himself under his immediate protection, without a public character, honestly endeavouring to promote the mutual good and benefit of both countries, should suffer, as you surely will do, if you withstand the offer which I have now the honour to make known to you.'

"What I said in answer to this generous, but inadmissible, offer, I shall make no parade of; it is enough to say, that I did not accept a single dollar from the King of Spain, or any in authority under him, which, as far as a negative can be proved, was made clear, when upon my journey homewards my bills were stopped, and my credit so completely

bankrupt, that I might have gone to prison at Bayonne, if I had not borrowed five hundred pounds of my friendly fellow-traveller Marchetti, which enabled me, to pay my way through France, and reach my own country.

“ How it came to pass that my circumstances should be so well known to Count Florida Blanca, is easily accounted for, when the dishonouring of my bills by Mr. Devisme, at Lisbon, through whose hands the Spanish banker passed them, was notorious to more than half Madrid, and could not be unknown to the minister. The fact is, that I had come into Spain without any other security than the good faith of government upon promise, pledged to me through Mr. Robinson, secretary of the treasury, that all bills drawn by me upon my banker in Pall Mall, should be instantly replaced to my credit, upon my accompanying them with a letter of advice to the said secretary Robinson. This letter of advice I regularly attached to every draft I made upon Messrs. Crofts, Devaynes, and Co. but from the day that I left London, to the day that I returned to it, including a period of fourteen months, not a single shilling was replaced to my account with my bankers, who persisted in advancing to my occasions with a liberality and confidence in my honour, that I must ever reflect upon with the warmest gratitude. If I was improvident in relying upon these assurances, they who made them were inexcusable in

breaking them, and betraying me into unmerited distress. I solemnly aver that I had the positive pledge of the treasury, through Mr. Robinson, for replacing every draught I should make upon my banker, and a very large sum was named, as applicable at my discretion, if the service should require it. I could explain this further, but I forbear. I had one thousand pounds advanced to me upon setting out; my private credit supplied every farthing beyond that; for the truth of which I need only to refer the reader to the following letter——

“ To John Robinson, Esquire, &c.

“ Sir, “ *Madrid, 8th of March, 1781.*

“ My banker informs me of a difficulty which has arisen in replacing the bills, which I have had occasion to draw upon him for the expences of my commission at this court.

“ As I have not had the honour of hearing from you on this subject, and as it does not appear that he had seen you, when he wrote to me, the alarm which such an event would else have given me, is mitigated by this consideration, as I am sure there can be no intention in government to disgrace me at this court, in a commission, undertaken on my part without any other stipulation than that of defraying my expences. I flatter myself, therefore, that you have before this done what is needful, in conformity to what was settled on our parting. Suffer

me to add, that by the partition I have made of my office with the gentleman who executes it, by the expences preparatory to my journey, all which I took on myself, and by many others since my departure, which I have not thought proper to put to the public account, I have greatly burthened my private affairs during my attendance on the business I am engaged in.

‘ That I have regulated my family here for the space of near a twelvemonth, with all possible economy; upon a scale in every respect as private, and void of ostentation, as possible, is notorious to all who know me here ; but a man must also know this court and country, to judge what the current charges of my situation must inevitably be ; what the *occasional* ones have been can only be explained by myself ; and as I can clearly make it appear that I have neither misapplied the money nor abused the trust of government, in any instance, I cannot merit, and I am persuaded I shall not experience any misunderstanding or unkindness.

‘ I have the honour to be, &c.

‘ R. C.’

“ I might have spared myself the trouble of this humiliating appeal. It produced just what it should produce—nothing ; for it was addressed to the feelings of those who had no feelings ; and

called for justice, where no justice was, no mercy, no compassion, honour or good faith.

“ I wearied the door of Lord North till his very servants drove me from it. I withstood the offer of a benevolent monarch, whose munificence would have rescued me; and I embraced ruin in my own country to preserve my honour as a subject of it; selling every acre of my hereditary estate, jointured on my wife by marriage settlement, who generously concurred in the sacrifice, which my improvident reliance upon the faith of government compelled me to make.

“ But I ought to speak of these things with more moderation, so many years having passed, and so many of the parties having died, since they took place. In prudence and propriety these pages ought not to have seen the light, till the writer of them was no more; neither would they, could I have persisted in my resolution for withholding them, till that event had consigned them into other hands; but there is something paramount to prudence and propriety, which wrests them from me—

My poverty, but not my will, consents.”

I have permitted Cumberland to speak for himself in this statement, because it is one in which his own testimony should be delivered in his own language. He says that he wrote down the speech

of Florida Blanca into his entry book, and rendered it into English as was his invariable practice, from which he transcribed it into his *Memoirs*. This gives it a character of authenticity greater than if he had ventured to narrate it from recollection after a lapse of four and twenty years.

With regard to the transaction itself, every one must applaud the dignified motives from which Cumberland acted, and the liberality of that government which gave him the opportunity of displaying such motives. I am not very familiar with the usages of courts on these occasions: but I believe it is not customary for a foreign power to offer an indemnification to the agent of a hostile nation. Something therefore may be justly ascribed to the individual honour, and integrity (in the estimation of the Spanish minister), with which Cumberland had discharged the delicate negotiation entrusted to him.

Why he was suffered to ruin himself in transacting the concerns of his own government, cannot perhaps now be known. His case, as he has stated it, was one of singular oppression. Whatever delinquency belonged to Cumberland, if any there was, might have found its due punishment in a regular way: but it does not appear that the refusal to reimburse his expenses arose from any intention of thus signifying displeasure, for the act commenced before any cause for that displeasure existed or could exist: the bills which he drew upon

his banker were not replaced *from the first*, which argued a deliberate intention to betray. There was, indeed, no specific declaration on the part of government that it would defray his expenses : but, there was something tantamount to such a declaration, the official correspondence between Cumberland and Lord Hillsborough, and which, by sanctioning his mission, virtually pledged it to the due provision for executing that mission. If, indeed, the refusal to pay him arose from any evasion of this sort, language can supply no terms too strong for the reprobation of such political shuffling and insincerity : but the business cannot be defended upon any principle. It is at least the duty of the government to secure its agents from loss and injury in its service : and as no man's patriotism can be supposed greater than his prudence, it cannot be expected that any one will serve his country to his own ruin. Though, therefore, it might be said that Cumberland entered upon the negotiation without any previous and distinct stipulation for the provision of his expenses, it was as obviously consistent with the common course of life that he should expect such a provision, as that the porter who carries a parcel without first fixing his reward, should wait for his shilling when he has discharged his trust.

That his frequent application to ministers, that his petitions and his memorials produced no ultimate recompense, while it excites our indigna-

tion may teach us this useful lesson, to act with courtiers as the law acts with every man, deem them knaves till they prove themselves the contrary.

When Cumberland received his regular recall and dismissal from the station he occupied, he prepared to return to England. This he did, as I have already related, by a different road from what he proceeded in when journeying to Spain. He lengthened his travels by seeing as much of foreign nations as his opportunities would permit. His track he has described with tedious and unnecessary minuteness: he tells of every village he arrives at, and laments, with wearisome repetition, the paltry and unsatisfying accommodations of Spanish inns. Without seeing any thing worthy of narration, without making any inquiries that led to discoveries which the world might wish to know or be better for the knowledge of, he has merely filled forty or fifty pages with a dull recapitulation of what stages he performed, with what celerity the mules moved, or with what obstinacy the muleteers resisted all entreaties to amend their itinerary system. This was information which might well have been spared, to make room for more instructive details of which he gives only occasional and very brief glimpses.

When he arrived at Bayonne, he found himself so extremely ill with fever that he was compelled to suspend his further progress, and call in medical

assistance. Here he languished for three weeks, during which time the malady greatly emaciated and enfeebled him, and here, while thus prostrated by disease, he first heard the unwelcome tidings of his bills being stopped, and of his person being consequently subjected to arrest. From this impending danger, however, he was relieved by the kindness of a friend, (Marchetti) who lent him five hundred pounds.

His mind being thus quieted, and co-operating with the healthful qualities of the climate in which he was, he soon found himself in a condition to resume his journey, which he did, travelling through Bourdeaux, Tours, Blois, and Orleans, to Paris, whence he proceeded to Ostend and there embarked for Margate, arriving in his house in Portland-Place, "to experience treatment which he had not merited, and to encounter losses he never overcame."

The only remarkable event that distinguished this long journey was the following, which I will relate in Cumberland's own words.

"I will here simply relate," says he, "an incident without attempting to draw any conjectures from it, which is, that whilst I laid ill at Bayonne, insensible, and as it was supposed at the point of death, the very monk, who had been so troublesome to me at Elvas,* found his way into my chamber,

* This was an Irish benedictine, who, when Cumberland was proceeding into Spain, entered his room one morning while at Elvas, vehemently

and upon the alarm given by my wife who perfectly recognized his person, was only driven out of it by force. Again when I was in Paris, and about to sit down to dinner, a sallad was brought to me by the lacquey, who waited on me, which was given to him for me by a red-haired Dominican, whose person, according to his description, exactly tallied with that of the aforesaid monk ; I dispatched my servant Camis in pursuit of him, but he had escaped, and my suspicion of the sallad being poisoned was confirmed by experiment on a dog.

“ I shall only add that somewhere in Castile, I forget the place, but it was between Valladolid and Burgos, as I was sitting on a bench at the door of a house, where my Calasseros were giving water to the mules, I tendered my snuff box to a grave elderly man, who seemed of the better sort of Castilians, and who appeared to have thrown himself in my way, sitting down beside me as one who invited conversation. The stranger looked steadily in my face, and after a pause put his fingers in my box, and, taking a very small portion of my snuff between them, said to me,—‘ I am not afraid, Sir, of trusting myself to you, whom I know to be an Englishman, and a person, in whose honour I may

inveighing against England and her government ; and when Cumberland entered his carriage he walked by the side of it, pertinaciously resisting his progress and anathematizing the drivers if they dared to move onwards ; nor did he quit his post, or cease from his vociferations, till they had passed through all the outposts and were in sight of Badajoz.

perfectly repose. But there is death concealed in many a man's snuff box, and I would seriously advise you on no account to take a single pinch from the box of any stranger, who may offer it to you ; and if you have done that already, I sincerely hope no such consequences as I allude to will result from your want of caution.' I continued in conversation with this stranger for some time ; I told him I had never before been apprised of the practices he had spoken of, and, being perfectly without suspicion, I might, or might not, have exposed myself to the danger, he was now so kind as to apprize me of, but I observed to him that however prudent it might be to guard myself against such evil practices in other countries, I should not expect to meet them in Castile, where the Spanish point of honour most decidedly prevailed. ' Ah, Senor,' he replied, ' they may not all be Spaniards, whom you have chanced upon, or shall hereafter chance upon, in Castile.' When I asked him how this snuff operated on those who took it, his answer was, as I expected—' On the brain.' I was not curious to enquire who this stranger was, as I paid little attention to his information at the time, though I confess it occurred to me, when after a few days I was seized with such agonies in my head, as deprived me of my senses : I merely give this anecdote, as it occurred ; I draw no inferences from it."

There is enough of agreeable mystery in this account to serve a novel-writer for the basis of a terrible incident. How might he paint an insidious assassin lurking about to snare his victim with a pinch of snuff; and death entering at an avenue hitherto unused in fiction.

CHAP. XVIII.

Cumberland's forbearance in relating the treatment he received from the English government.—His MEMORIAL, addressed to LORD NORTH.—Its failure.—His warm remonstrances to Mr. SECRETARY ROBINSON.—Retires to Tunbridge.—Celebrates that place in his MEMOIRS and in RETROSPECTION.—The pleasures of reading.—The family which accompanied him to Tunbridge.—Publishes his ANECDOTES OF SPANISH PAINTERS.—Accused of attacking SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS.—Examination of this charge.—Brief history of painting in Spain.—His comedy of the WALLOONS acted.—His character of HENDERSON.—The sneering scepticism of DAVIES reproved.

I HAVE dwelt much longer upon Cumberland's narrative of what occurred to him in Spain than it was, at first, my intention to do: nor should I have departed from that intention had I not become impressed with the idea that it formed a remarkable era in the life of a literary man, that it was distinguished by circumstances of a peculiar nature, and that Cumberland had been treated with a degree of injustice, by his employers, too flagrant to be passed over without some expression of abhorrence.

His own recital of this injustice is written without any acrimony. He tells of it as of a misfortune which befell him, but he does not vent reproaches

or insults against those who were the authors of that misfortune. He laments the loss which he sustained, and the privations which such a loss must force upon a man who means to live honestly in society; but he laments it with the sensibility of a wounded, not with the bitterness of a resentful, heart. This meekness, this charitable oblivion of so violent an injury, of an injury whose consequences extended to the last moment of his life, and under which he bent at the very moment when he wrote, deserves to be recorded with the highest approbation: it adds a lustre to his misfortune, and awakens the pity and veneration of those who contemplate a man nearly in his eightieth year, temperately recounting the adverse strokes of unmerited misfortune by which his proudest hopes of life were blighted.

With what injustice he seems to have been treated, and what claims he appears to have had upon the government, the following memorial will shew:—

“ To the Right Honourable Lord North,
&c. &c. &c.

“ The humble Memorial of Richard Cumberland
“ Sheweth,

“ That your Memorialist, in April 1780, received his Majesty's most secret and confidential orders and instructions to set out for the court of Spain in company with the Abbe Hussey, one of his Catholic Majesty's chaplains, for the

purpose of negotiating a separate peace with that court.

“ That to render the object of this commission more secret, your Memorialist was directed to take his family with him to Lisbon, under the pretence of recovering the health of one of his daughters, which he accordingly did, and having sent the Abbe Hussey before him to the Court of Spain, agreeably to the King’s instructions, your Memorialist and his family soon after repaired to Aranjuez, where his Catholic Majesty then kept his court.

“ That your Memorialist upon setting out on this important undertaking received, by the hands of John Robinson, Esquire, one of the secretaries of the Treasury, the sum of one thousand pounds on account, with directions how he should draw, through the channel of Portugal, upon his banker in England for such further sums as might be necessary, (particularly for a large discretionary sum to be employed, as occasion might require, in secret services) and your Memorialist was directed to accompany his drafts by a separate letter to Mr. Secretary Robinson, advising him what sum or sums he had given order for, that the same might be replaced to your Memorialist’s credit with the bank of Messieurs Crofts and Co. in Pall-Mall.

“ That your Memorialist, in the execution of this commission, for the space of nearly fourteen months, defrayed the expenses of Abbe Hussey’s

separate journey into Spain, paid all charges incurred by him during four months residence there, and supplied him with money for his return to England, no part of which has been repaid to your Memorialist.

“ That your Memorialist, with his family, took two very long and expensive journies, (the one by way of Lisbon, and the other through France) no consideration for which has been granted to him.

“ That your Memorialist, during his residence in Spain, was obliged to follow the removals of the court to Aranjuez, San-Ildefonso, the Escorial, and Madrid, besides frequent visits to the Pardo: in all which places, except the Pardo, he was obliged to lodge himself, the expense of which can only be known to those, who in the service of their court have incurred it.

“ That every article of necessary expense, being inordinately high in Madrid, your Memorialist, without assuming any vain appearance of a minister, and with as much domestic frugality as possible, incurred a very heavy charge.

“ That your Memorialist having no courier with him, nor any cypher, was obliged to employ his own servant in that trust, and the servant of Abbe Hussey, at his own proper cost, no part of which has been repaid to him.

“ That your Memorialist did, at considerable charge, obtain papers and documents, containing information of a very important nature, which need

not here be enumerated; of which charge so incurred no part has been repaid.

“ That upon the capture of the East and West India ships by the enemy, your Memorialist was addressed by many of the British prisoners, some of whom he relieved with money, and in all cases obtained the prayer of their memorials. Your Memorialist also, through the favour of the Bishop of Burgos, took with him out of Spain some valuable British seamen, and restored them to his Majesty's fleet; and this also he did at his own cost.

“ That your Memorialist, during his residence in Spain, was indispensibly obliged to cover these his unavoidable expenses by several drafts upon his banker to the amount of 4500*l.* of which not one single bill has been replaced, nor one farthing issued to his support during fourteen months expensive and laborious duty in the King's immediate and most confidential service; the consequence of which unparalleled treatment was, that your Memorialist was stopped and arrested at Bayonne, by order, from his remittancers at Madrid; in this agonizing situation your Memorialist, being then in the height of a most violent fever, surrounded by a family of helpless women in an enemy's country, and abandoned by his employers, on whose faith he had relied, found himself incapable of proceeding on his journey, and destitute of means for subsisting where he was: under this accumulated distress he must have sunk and expired, had not

the generosity of an officer in the Spanish service, who had accompanied him into France, supplied his necessities with the loan of five hundred pounds, and passed the King of Great Britain's bankrupt servant into his own country, for which humane action this friendly officer, (Marchetti by name), was arrested at Paris, and by the Count D'Aranda remanded back to Madrid, there to take his chance for what the influence of France may find occasion to devise against him.

"Your Memorialist, since his return to England, having, after innumerable attempts, gained one only admittance to your lordship's person, for the space of more than ten months, and not one answer to the frequent and humble suit he has made to you by letter, presumes now, for the last time, to solicit your consideration of his case, and as he is persuaded it is not, and cannot be, in your lordship's heart to devote and abandon to unmerited ruin an old and faithful servant of the crown, who has been the father of four sons, (one of whom has lately died, and three are now carrying arms in the service of their King), your Memorialist humbly prays, that you will give order for him to be relieved in such manner, as to your lordship's wisdom shall seem meet—

"All which is humbly submitted by

"Your lordship's most obedient

"And most humble servant,

"Richard Cumberland,"

This memorial, thus simply, perspicuously, and, in some parts, affectingly urged, produced, as the reader may anticipate, no benefit to Cumberland. Lord North, he thought, never read it; a brief encomium on his lordship's candour and sincerity; but, though he did not affect to exonerate him from all culpability, he justly considered Mr. Secretary Robinson as the one who had the largest share of obloquy in the business. It was his duty, Cumberland conceived, to solicit the fulfilment of that promise which had been made through him, and it was in his power, he believed, to have obtained that fulfilment, had he chosen to solicit it. To him, therefore, as to one who was more immediately the cause of his misfortune, he addressed several warm remonstrances; remonstrances, indeed, of such a character, as no man of spirit, in Cumberland's opinion, "ought to have put up with;" he did put up with them, however, either because he wanted spirit to resent them, or believed that he was not bound to view them as personal accusations.

With Lord North Cumberland eventually became intimate, when the awful visitation of blindness had reduced him to a state of mortifying helplessness, and robbed him of all external sources of comfort. It was then, however, that he appeared more truly great than when extrinsic and accidental greatness belonged to him; it was then that the powers of his mind, the resources of his ge-

nus, the stores of his memory, and the brilliancy of his imagination, were displayed with a grace and profusion which seemed to be increased by the malady that oppressed him; or, perhaps, the spectator instinctively drew a comparison between his bodily condition, and the intellectual vigour which he exhibited, as we are apt to aggrandise the superiority of whatever is performed under seeming disabilities till the probable at last swells into the marvellous.

With Lord George Germain also, he continued to live in uninterrupted friendship, both while he presided at the Board of Trade, and after he had resigned that office. He represents himself, indeed, as having sometimes conducted some delicate transactions for his lordship, and in a manner always satisfactory to him. This was in consequence of the great number of American loyalists who, on his levee days, usually resorted to him; and he mentions one instance, in particular, of a naval officer, who had written a letter to Lord George Germain, containing expressions highly disrespectful to him and to Cumberland, upon whom he immediately waited, and compelled him to write and sign an apology of his own dictating.

When Lord North's administration was subverted, and the Board of Trade was dissolved by the operations of what is commonly called Burke's Bill, Cumberland was dismissed with a compensation which he represents as less than a moiety of what he was deprived of. This diminution of his

pecuniary resources, concurring with his Spanish losses, which had compelled him to sacrifice the patrimony he was born to, reduced him to the necessity of diminishing his expenditure, and of providing an establishment more suitable to his income.

London, however, is not the place where a public man can best pursue plans of economy ; nor, perhaps, is it desirable that any place should be at once the scene of liberal competency, and of subsequent embarrassment. A man commonly flies from a spot that has witnessed his prosperity, when he can no longer maintain even the appearance of it ; and it is the surest way, indeed, to avoid the painful retrospections of our own mind, and the suspicious condolence of our friends and acquaintance.

Cumberland, therefore, forsook the metropolis, and, with the remnant of his shattered fortune, sought peace and health in the retreats of Tunbridge, nor had he ever afterwards, according to his own declaration, an abiding place in town. The comforts and conveniencies of this spot he has celebrated in his *Mémoires*, and he had reason to do so, for he says, that “ during the whole of his long residence at Tunbridge Wells, he never experienced a single hour’s indisposition that confined him to his bed,” though previously to that period he had undergone as much illness, and fought as hardly for his life with fevers, as most men.

Of his residence at this place, and of some of the events that befell him there, he thus pleasingly speaks in the poem which he published so shortly before his death :

“ Hail to thee, Tunbridge ! Hail, Hygeian fount !
Still as thy waters flow, may they dispense
Health to the sick and comfort to the sad !
Sad I came to thee, comfortless and sick
Of many sorrows : still th’ envenom’d shaft
Of base injustice rankl’d in my breast ;
Still on my haggard cheek the fever hung—
‘ My only recompense’—Thirty long years
Have blanch’d my temples since I first was taught
The painful truth, that I but mock’d my hopes,
And fool’d my senses, whilst I went astray
To palaces and courts to search for that,
Which dwells not in them.—No: to you, my books !
To you, the dear companions of my youth,
Still my best comforters, I turn’d for peace :
To you at morning break I came, with you
Again I commun’d o’er the midnight lamp,
And haply rescu’d from the abyss of time
Some precious relics of the Grecian muse,
Which else had perish’d : These were pleasing toils,
For these some learned men, who knew how deep
I delv’d to fetch them up, have giv’n me praise,
And I am largely paid ; of this no court,
No craft can rob me, and I boldly trust
The treasure will not perish at my death.

Here, wrapt in meditation, I enjoy’d
My calm retreat ; here in the honest hearts
Of a brave peasantry I now repos’d
That confidence, which never was betray’d
By them, nor from them shall it be withdrawn
To the last moment of my life, by me.
Four gallant sons, ‘twixt land and sea, I shar’d ;
My country had them all ; and two had died
On distant shores beyond the Atlantic stream.

When England call'd her volunteers to arms,
And rear'd her beacon on the neighb'ring hill,
That overhangs our hamlet: At the call
Uprose my brave compatriots, seiz'd their arms,
Flock'd to the standard of unconquer'd* Kent,
And bade me lead them forth; I took the sword,
Gift of their love, on which they had engrav'd
A pledge by them kept sacred through a course
Of nine years faithful service, and I trust
Till by command I took my last sad leave,
My eye was never from them, nor my heart."

One part of the preceding extract (that where he commemorates the many hours of unalloyed happiness which he derived from his books), will be read by every literary man with a pleasing consciousness of its truth. How few reflections upon the employment of time, indeed, can equal those which a scholar feels when he retraces in his imagination the hours he has devoted to voluntary and secluded study. The remembrance of past actions, on which virtue has fixed her approving stamp, may equal, but certainly cannot surpass them. In a mind tinctured with the love of knowledge, every pleasing idea is associated, as it contemplates those moments of placid enjoyment when instruction was silently insinuating itself, and when every day opened new stores of intellectual wealth which the eager pupil of wisdom panted to possess. Inanimate objects become connected with our progress, and we remember, with delight, the shady walk, the silent grove, or the beauteous landscape, where we first

* *Invicta*, the motto to the arms of Kent.

opened some favourite volume, or first dwelt upon some matchless effusion of the muse still cherished by the memory. These are emotions familiar to the bosom of every student, and they are such as ever come with welcome, for they revive the recollection of a period which is endeared to him by the most pleasing images of past felicity. Our advancement in knowledge, or our completion of what we wish to know, is attended by few of those gay and inspiring sensations which accompany our initiation, when all before us is new and untried, and hope promises, with flattering delusion, all that we wish, and more than we find.

Books are companions which accommodate themselves, with unrepublishing willingness, to all our humours. If we are jocund, or if we are sad, if we are studious to learn, or desirous only to be amused, he that has a relish for reading, will find the ready means of supplying all his intellectual wants in the silence of his library. They are friends whom no estimation can overvalue; they are always at our call, and ready to offer their aid and consolation; nor need we overstrain our desires by courtesy, for the moment they cease to be welcome we may dismiss them from our society without fear of reproach or offence. Of what other friends can we say as much?

Cumberland, though he retired to them from the tumults of public life, was not des-

tined, however, to find undisturbed repose. He perceived the health of his wife declining, and he perceived it with an aggravation of sorrow which must have struck deep into a mind possessing sensibility. "She was sinking under the effects which her late sufferings and exertions, in attending upon him, had entailed upon her." This was not, indeed, the fault of Cumberland, but surely it was his misfortune; and dear as must be the recollection of a wife, who sacrifices her own existence in discharging her duty to her husband in sickness and affliction, still, the remembrance that it *was* a sacrifice weighs heavily upon the heart, and embitters our sorrows with something like remorse.

Cumberland bears the most unequivocal testimony to the virtues and fidelity of his wife, and it is pleasing to contemplate a picture of conjugal harmony, of sincerity, love, and confidence, in marriage, which is so rarely to be found. Something, no doubt, may be attributed to that tenderness with which we instinctively mention the dead; but even with that deduction there remains little reason to doubt that he found a degree of connubial happiness of which he might justly boast.

The family which accompanied him to Tunbridge Wells were, besides his wife, his second daughter Sophia, his infant one Marianne, and his three surviving sons, Richard, Charles, and William. His eldest daughter had married Lord

Edward Bentinck, brother to the Duke of Portland ; and his second son, George, had been killed at the siege of Charlestown, the very day after he had been appointed to the command of an armed vessel.

Shortly after his return from Spain, he published his " *Anecdotes of Eminent Painters in Spain,*" in two small octavo volumes. This was a work of original research, and introduced to the lovers of the art, and to artists, the names and productions of men very little known beyond the limits of their own country. Many of the anecdotes are amusing and interesting. Of the accuracy of his notions, however, with respect to the art itself, I can say nothing, but what would expose my own ignorance ; but I have heard an artist of some eminence acknowledge the general taste and fidelity of Cumberland's opinions. To these anecdotes he afterwards added another publication, " *An accurate and descriptive catalogue of the several paintings in the King of Spain's Palace at Madrid, with some account of the pictures in the Buen-Retiro.*"

This catalogue was the first that had been made, and was now done by the permission of the king of Spain, at Cumberland's request, being transmitted to him after his return to England.

As if the malice of criticism, however, delighted to vex a man who was so sensible of its power, Cumberland had no sooner published these *Anecdotes*

than he was accused of having violently and unjustly attacked, in the second volume, the character of his friend Sir Joshua Reynolds. Such a charge, living, as he then was, in habits of close intimacy with Reynolds, must have come with aggravated force; and Cumberland is at some pains, in his *Memoirs*, to vindicate himself from its truth. The supposed injury was committed in that part of the second volume where he is speaking of *Mengs*, and as the passage is not long I will extract it.

“ *Mengs* loved the truth, but he did not always find it out; under all the disadvantages of a contracted education, and soured by the insupportable severity of his father’s discipline, his habit became saturnine and morose, and his manners unsocial and inelegant: he had a great propensity for speaking what are called plain truths, but which oftentimes, in fact, are no truths at all. His biographer and editor Azara, has given us an instance of this sort, in a reply he made to Pope Clement XIV. His Holiness had asked *Mengs*’s opinion of some pictures he had collected at Venice. They are good for nothing, said *Mengs*. How so? rejoined his Holiness, they have been highly commended—naming a certain painter as his authority for their merit. Most Holy Father, replied *Mengs*, we are both professors of the same art; he extols what he cannot equal, and I depreciate what I am sensible I can excel. *N. y. yo somos dos profesores. El uno alaba lo que es supe-*

rior á su esfera ; y el otro vitupera lo que le es superior. I should suspect that Clement thought very little the worse of his pictures, and not much the better of *Mengs* for his repartee. Whether *Mengs* really thought with contempt of art which was inferior to his own, I will not pretend to decide ; but that he was apt to speak contemptuously of artists superior to himself, I am inclined to believe ; Azara tells us, that he pronounced of the academical lectures of our Reynolds, that they were calculated to mislead young students into error, teaching nothing but those superficial principles which he plainly avers are all that the author himself knows of the art he professes. *Del libro moderno del Sr. Reynolds, Ingles, decia que es una obra, que puede conducir los juvenes al error ; posque se queda en los principios superficiales que conoce solamente a quel autor.* Azara immediately proceeds to say that *Mengs* was of a temperament *colerico y adusto*, and that his bitter and satirical turn created him *infinitos agraviados y quejosos*. When his historian and friend says this there is no occasion for me to repeat the remark. If the genius of *Mengs* had been capable of producing a composition equal to that of the tragic and pathetic Ugolino, I am persuaded such a sentence as the above would never have passed his lips ; but flattery made him vain, and sickness rendered him peevish ; he found himself at Madrid, in a country without rivals, and because the arts had travelled out of

his sight, he was disposed to think they existed nowhere but on his own pallet. The time, perhaps, is at hand, when our virtuosi will extend their route to Spain, and of these some one will probably be found, who, regarding with just indignation, these dogmatical decrees of *Mengs*, will take in hand the examination of his paintings, which I have now enumerated; and we may then be told, with the authority of science, that his *Nativity*, though so splendidly encased, and covered with such care, that the *very winds of Heaven* are not permitted to *visit its face too roughly*, would have owed more to the chrystal than it does in some parts, at least, had it been less transparent than it is; that it discovers an abortive and puisny bambino, which seems copied from a bottle; that *Mengs* was an artist who had seen much, and invented little; that he dispenses neither life nor death to his figures, excites no terror, rouses no passions, and risques no flights; that by studying to avoid particular defects, he incurs general ones, and paints with tameness and servility: that the contracted scale and idea of a painter of miniatures, as which he was brought up, is to be traced in all or most of his compositions; in which a finished delicacy of pencil exhibits the *Hand* of the Artist, but gives no emanations of the *Soul* of the Master: if it is beauty, it does not warm; if it is sorrow, it excites no pity. That when the Angel announces the salutation to Mary, it is a messenger that has neither used dis-

patch in the errand, nor grace in the delivery ; that although *Rubens* was by one of his oracular sayings condemned to the ignominious dullness of a Dutch translator, *Mengs* was as capable of painting *Rubens's* Adoration, as he was of creating the Star in the East that ushered the Magi : but these are questions above my capacity ; I resign *Mengs* to abler critics, and *Reynolds* to better defenders ; well contented that posterity should admire them both, and well assured that the fame of our countryman is established beyond the reach of envy or detraction."

If the reader be as willingly disposed as I am to acquit Cumberland of all intentional depreciation of his friend's merits, he may still think, however, that it was a needless violation of kindness to diffuse the knowledge even of another's opinion when it tended to bring his abilities into question. It was at least in his power to have shewn forbearance ; and when he found that so unequivocal a censure had been passed upon his friend, by a foreign writer, he might have forborne to give it currency by translating it. It is true he afterwards undertakes his vindication : but is not this like a man who first wounds you and then very assiduously runs about to procure assistance, and to stanch the blood ?

Perhaps the reader will not be displeased to find here the brief history of painting in Spain, with which Cumberland has preceded his *Anecdotes*.

The work is not very commonly to be met with, and the topic is one not yet rendered worthless by familiarity.

“ Spain has given birth to so many eminent painters, of whom there is no memorial in the rest of Europe, and abounds with so many admirable examples of their art, dispersed in churches, convents, and palaces, where the curiosity of modern travellers rarely carries them, that I persuade myself it will not be unacceptable to the public to have some account of men and works so little known and yet so highly worthy to be recorded. I am not aware that this has been professedly attempted by any Spanish writer, except by *Palominio*; who in an elaborate treatise on the Art of Painting, in two folio volumes, has inserted the lives of two hundred and thirty-three painters and sculptors, who flourished in Spain from the time of *Ferdinand the Catholic* to the conclusion of the reign of *Philip the Fourth*; of these materials I have principally availed myself in the following sheets, but not without due attention to other authorities, that interpose accounts differing from his, or extend to particulars, which he has failed to enumerate. He is said to have written with a competent knowledge of his subject, as an art, of which he was himself a professor; and in rules for the practice of painting he is very diffusive: if he had been more communicative or entertaining in those matters, for which I chiefly consulted him,

I might have needed less apology for the present publication : many particulars however have been furnished to me from tradition, which help out the sterility and dryness of his catalogue ; and I must not omit to acknowledge the assistance I drew from the treatise of *Pacheco*, a book now become extremely rare and hardly to be obtained. I know there was an English abridgement of Palomino's *Painters* published in the year 1739, but the original is in very few hands ; so that, unless some Spanish biographer shall speedily be found with public spirit to engage in the task of rescuing the fame of his ingenious countrymen from approaching extinction, their histories at least will soon be lost, whatever may be the fate of their works. The world is in possession of many memoirs of the artists of Italy, France, and Flanders ; and the painters, who distinguished themselves in England, have by happy fortune found a biographer, whose entertaining talents will secure to them a reception with posterity ; whilst of all the painters, to whose memory I have dedicated this slight attempt, scarce a name is heard without the limits of Spain, except those of *Velasquez*, *Murillo*, and *Ribeira* : the paintings of the latter it is true are very generally known, many excellent performances of his being dispersed through Europe : some respectable remains of *Velasquez* are to be found in Italy, but the principal exertions of his pencil were reserved for his own country, and the sovereign, who entertained him

in his service; these, we may naturally suppose, can never be extracted: and as for *Murillo*, although some pieces of his have in time past been extracted from Seville, yet I think I may venture to say, that not many of them, which pass under his name, are legitimate; and in a less proportion can we find amongst such, as are true pictures, any of so capital a rank, as to impart a competent idea of his extraordinary merit.

“ The candid reader will observe, that I do not profess to give the Lives of the Painters, who are treated of in this catalogue, for which my materials do not suffice; nor shall I hazard many criticisms upon their respective works, for which more science would be requisite than I can pretend to; still I hope there will be found sufficient novelty to amuse such of my readers, as can endure to hear of paintings, as they strike the feelings of an ordinary observer, without presuming to dissect them in the learned jargon of a Virtuoso. It will be remembered, therefore, that I offer nothing more to the public than Anecdotes of the Eminent Painters, who have flourished in Spain during the two centuries last past; and in this description I include all such illustrious foreigners, as have resorted to Spain for the display of their talents under protection of the princes or nobles of that kingdom; these are a pretty numerous class, and in treating of them I shall study to avoid repeating what may have been better told by others; but

even of these perhaps some local anecdotes will occur, which may at least be supplementary to the accounts already in existence. My residence in Spain, and some advantages incident to my peculiar situation there, gave me repeated access to every thing I wished to see ; almost every religious foundation throughout the kingdom contains a magazine of art ; in resorting to these nothing will be found, of which a stranger can complain, unless of the gloominess of some of the edifices, and the unfavourable lights, in which many capital paintings are disposed : in private houses it is not unusual to discover very fine pictures in neglect and decay ; thrown aside amongst the rubbish of cast-off furniture ; whether it be, that the possessor has no knowledge of their excellence, or thinks it below his notice to attend to their preservation ; but how much soever the Spaniards have declined from their former taste and passion for the elegant arts, I am persuaded they have in no degree fallen off from their national character for generosity, which is still so prevalent amongst them, that a stranger, who is interestedly disposed to avail himself of their munificence, may in a great measure obtain whatever is the object of his praise and admiration : as for the royal collections at Madrid, the Escorial, and elsewhere, he will meet a condescension so accommodated to his curiosity, that the one is as little likely to be exhausted as the other ; the

facility of access to every palace in possession of his Catholic Majesty is only to be equalled by the gratification it produces."

Before Cumberland had settled himself at Tunbridge, he produced his comedy of the *Walloons* in 1782. The character of *Father Sullivan* (in which it was thought, by many, that the author intended an adumbration of his late colleague in the Spanish mission, the Abbé Hussey), was written expressly for Henderson, who wished to have him drawn "a fine bold-faced villain," (to use his own language) "the direst and deepest in nature, so he had but motives strong enough to bear him out, and such a prominence of natural character, as should secure him from the contempt of his audience." In obedience to these injunctions Cumberland drew the character: but the play was not very successful, nor perhaps did it deserve to be so.

Too much, indeed, cannot be said in disapprobation of the practice among dramatic writers, of drawing characters for particular actors. In Cumberland's time it did not prevail so much as it does now, when, I believe, every person who sits down to produce a drama for the stage, no longer looks to nature, but to the green-room, for the source of his inspiration. It was not thus, however, that Eschylus or Euripides, that Terence or Menander, that Moliere or Racine, or that our own dramatic

bards, Shakspeare and Jonson, Beaumont and Fletcher, Massinger and Ford, raised those trophies to their genius which have adorned their names during a long succession of ages, and the splendour of which no lapse of time can tarnish or destroy. They opened the volume of nature herself, and, gifted with powers to trace her living characters, they caught the flame of truth from her page and transmitted it to their own. They did not consider what their own generation of actors could effect, but they gave to them, and they left to posterity, models by which the stage might form itself to perfection. They knew that nature was in all ages the same, when properly understood; but they also knew, that the manners of one age became obsolete in the next. It might have suited the unaspiring ambition of some humble writer, to catch the follies as they rose, and to embody them for some actor whose talents, brief and unsubstantial as the objects they were employed upon, would be able to display, with the aid of theatrical grimace, the living peculiarities of his time. But the original and the copy were alike of transitory duration. The current of time, in its ceaseless course, bore upon its surface new follies and new vices, which were hurried along into the general gulph of oblivion, to be succeeded by others of equal instability and equal insignificance. These weeds of the human mind

passed by unheeded by those who had power to search into the hidden recesses of the heart, and to shew how the secret operation of the passions modified and directed the course of human action. They took a nobler flight, and with an untired wing and undazzled eye, soared to the recesses of light and truth itself, nor stopped their eagle-flight to seize the gilded insect that fluttered in the meridian ray of a summer sun. Still less, in looking to the source of nature, did they pause to consider how her language and her inspiration could be embodied by the humblest of her children. They did not follow in the tardy pace of improvement, but, stretching out their career beyond the progress of time, they held up models of perfection for after ages to reach. If Shakspeare, for instance, had written for the actors of his day, instead of writing for all mankind, which of his productions would now be in existence? In the rude and unformed state of the stage at that period, and long afterwards, where was the talent to be found that could have given life and action to a Hamlet, a Macbeth, an Othello, an Iago, a Falstaff, or a Mercutio; characters, the delineation of which demand a union and intimate combination of talents which, even in the present improved state of theatric exhibition, are rarely to be found. This one instance alone is sufficient to shew the absurdity of writing with a particular

view to certain performers; if the practice were extensively adopted, it would lead to the annihilation of all progressive improvement in dramatic exhibitions. Such a universal adoption, however, is not greatly to be apprehended, for let but a Shakspeare once more arise among us, and he would free himself from the shackles of custom, as his great predecessor did.

It cannot be denied, indeed, that when Cumberland drew for Henderson, he drew for an artist who was capable of filling up the boldest outline that the poet's hand could sketch. Henderson was a man of extraordinary powers, and Cumberland, who knew him well, seems to have had much regard for his character, with a sufficient admiration of his talents, though he was not successful in procuring an engagement for him with Garrick. He was an admirable mimic, and in his sallies of imitation he would invent speeches and dialogues so appropriate to the characters he was pourtraying, that many good things of his own producing have probably been ascribed to those on whom he fixed them in a moment of sportive mimicry. "If," says Cumberland, "there was any body now qualified to draw a parallel between the characters of Foote and Henderson, I don't pretend to say how the men of wit and humour might divide the laurel between them, but in this men would agree, that poor Foote attached to

himself very few true friends, and Henderson very many, and those highly respectable, men virtuous in their lives, and enlightened in their understandings. Foote, vain, extravagant, embarrassed, led a wild and thoughtless course of life, yet when death approached him, he shrunk back into himself, saw and confessed his errors, and, I have reason to believe, was truly penitent. Henderson's conduct through life was uniformly decorous, and in the concluding stage of it, exemplarily devout."

This is a high character, but I am willing to hope not an undeserved one. The reference to the last moments of Foote has probably some connection with his own efforts for his amendment: for I remember that Davies alludes (with a sort of sneering scepticism, which does him little credit), to his endeavours. "Good Christians," says he, "are not perhaps acquainted with the obligations they owe Mr. Cumberland. By the power of his eloquence, and the strength of his arguments, he almost converted, some time before his death, that wicked unbeliever, Samuel Foote, to Christianity: he assured his friends, that if he had lived a little longer, he did not doubt but he should have completed his work, and made a good man of him."

There is a levity in this statement which ill becomes the subject. If Foote needed conversion, if his belief required strengthening, and if Cumberland really laboured to effect that conversion

and to give that strength, let it be recorded among those actions of his life which most adorn and dignify his memory : but if the fact were otherwise, and assistance was neither required nor given, it would be no justification of the irreverence with which the allusion to a thing so solemn, as a preparation for eternity, is here treated. Surely his friend Johnson would have frowned upon such indecorous and insipid pertness had it come beneath his notice.

CHAP. XIX.

Cumberland produces the MYSTERIOUS HUSBAND, a tragedy.—The excellence of its plot.—Examination of its characters.—Epilogue to the ARAB.—Cumberland writes the OBSERVER.—Comparison of this with the Essays of JOHNSON, ADDISON, and STEELE.—Examination of some particular papers in this work.—Cumberland argues against female acquirements.—The folly of this, and the absurdity of his exemplification.—His religious papers commended.—Cumberland's notions of political liberty.—His character of ABRAHAM ABRAHAMS.—Anticipated in one of his papers by Mr. PINKERTON.—An instance of that writer's ineffable absurdity.—Cumberland's mock criticism upon OTHELLO defective.—General character of the OBSERVER.—Cumberland says that the style of it is "simple, clear, and harmonious."—Examination of this claim.—Instances cited to prove that his style has neither of these qualities.—The style of GOLDSMITH examined and praised.—The iniquitous proceedings of those who publish trials for adultery.—Some advice to the SOCIETY FOR THE SUPPRESSION OF VICE.—An example how Cumberland's style might be improved.—Examined with the greater rigour because of his gratuitous assumption of its superior merits.—His OBSERVER that work which will most probably convey his name down to posterity.

THE next dramatic production of Cumberland was the *Mysterious Husband*, a tragedy, in which he also portrayed a character (*Lord Davenant*,) expressly for the display of Henderson's peculiar powers, and he performed it, according to the author's testimony, with conspicuous excellence.

He who has been accustomed to associate with his ideas of tragedy a uniform pomp of diction and elevation of sentiment, will be disappointed when he takes up the *Mysterious Husband*, which is written in prose, and approaches, in some places, to the easy levity of comedy. The situations, however, are truly tragic, and the catastrophe is one as solemn and affecting as can well be devised.

Of tragedies, founded upon domestic incidents, and composed without any stateliness of language; there were examples upon the English stage before Cumberland produced this. Lillo had written his *George Barnwell* and *Fatal Curiosity*, and Moore had produced his *Gamester*, all of them devoid of those great and magnificent events, and of that laboured dignity of style, which had been supposed to belong as necessarily to tragedy as the divine right was once thought essential to regal dominion.

Without staying to inquire whether as much might not be reasonably urged in defence of familiar tragedy as of sentimental comedy, I shall proceed to examine the one before me, and discriminate its merits and defects. It partakes of both, but certainly more largely of the former.

The plot is contrived with exquisite felicity; and though Cumberland has made it subservient to a drama which arrests the feelings in the most powerful manner, I will not conceal my regret that it never fell into better hands. Had the imagination of Otway teemed with such a fiction, of what a tragedy might not the British stage now be possessed? It is one so probably connected, so heart-rending, and so morally instructive, that I question if any play of modern times can be opposed to it as superior.

Great praise, indeed, is due to Cumberland. I know not whether he invented it, by a lucky effort of his own fancy, or whether he compounded its chief characteristics from the suggestions of other writers: but he has so skilfully supported it, involved it in so much pleasing intricacy, and, (what is very unusual in him) forborne its development so thoroughly till the concluding scenes of the play, that he merits every commendation which such excellence can receive.

The language of this drama is to be tried by the standard neither of tragedy nor comedy, for it belongs to neither. I prefer it, however, to his diction when he labours to construct it according to the received forms of tragic composition. It is animated, expressive, and occasionally elevated, but very seldom turgid, a fault which Cumberland seems to have been incapable of avoiding when he strove to be dignified. Sometimes, indeed, he lapses into unnatural tumor in the present

play, but he seems to have aimed rather at an even tenor of polished discourse, and has generally attained what he wished.

The first interview between *Captain Dormer* and *Lord Davenant* is managed with great success. Nothing could be devised more calculated to heighten the infamy of *Davenant*, or to display the grateful and unsuspecting confidence of *Dormer*, than the propositions made by the latter respecting his sister. The same praise may be given to the interposition of *Marianne*, when *Dormer* and *Sir Harry Harlow* are fighting, by which the innocence of the latter is unequivocally established by an event apparently so accidental and yet natural.

Of the characters, *Lord Davenant's* is the most prominent. This was written by Cumberland for Henderson, and eminently he supported it. But he failed to give it what Henderson required, such a display of natural character as might secure it from contempt. Lord Davenant is a villain of so black a die, with a mind so lost to all elevated, generous, or tender sensations, that he excites nothing but unmingled abhorrence. His treatment of his wife is gloomily ferocious: there is no touch of pity in his disposition; and the sullen apathy with which he dismisses the question of his son's promotion, proves that the father had as little dominion in his heart as the husband. The atrocity of his conduct towards *Marianne*, has been too often equalled, I am afraid, and without the in-

fiction of such penalties as are produced in this tragedy. The seducer of female innocence triumphs in his guilt, while the deluded victim of his artifices is left to pine in hopeless misery, an outcast from society, with no friend to admonish, no gentle hand to soothe the wounds which villainy has given, and which the unfeeling cruelty of a sordid policy aggravates and inflames.

The next character which excites attention is *Lady Davenant*. She of course is contrasted with her husband; and meekness, forbearance, and virtue, are given to her, that they may the more glaringly exhibit the arrogance, resentment, and vice of her husband. She is, however, made a very interesting personage. The dignity of her sentiments, the nobleness of her nature, and the generous loftiness of her behaviour towards the tyrant who had wedded her, command, and preserve the admiration and applause of the reader.—This admiration and applause she forfeits only once, and that is when she incautiously admits her former lover to embrace and caress her. Had Cumberland duly considered the character which he gave *Lady Davenant* to support, he would have forborne to place her in a situation quite derogatory from what she is obviously intended to appear.

I do not, however, accord in opinion with Cumberland, that “*Lady Davenant* is the best female part he ever tendered to the stage.” That praise, perhaps, belongs rather to the character of *Lady Paragon*, in the *Natural Son*, the peculiar

merits of which I shall discuss when I examine that play.

Little applause can be given to any other of the characters in this tragedy. *Charles Davenant* is merely a gentleman; *Captain Dormer* has some qualities about him which interest, but they are not adequately developed. *Sir Harry Harlow* is too flippant for tragedy; and yet he has not sufficient vivacity for comedy. He is a dramatic abortion.

But worse than an abortion is the character of *Sir Edmund Travers*; nor can I conceive for what purpose the author introduced him. He neither accelerates nor retards the progress of the action. He is disgustingly odious. His meanness is without humour to make it ridiculous, and his fatuity without virtue to make it respectable. His pertinacious belief of his niece's happiness against every outward appearance is mere folly: yet it is a folly in which Cumberland seems to have delighted, for he has made a similar exhibition of it in his comedy of *First Love*.

Cumberland wrote one more part for Henderson, and that was the character of the *Arab* in the play of that name. It was acted only once, for his benefit, and was never published. The epilogue to it has been thought worthy of preservation by the author, and, as it is short, may be transcribed here. It was spoken by Miss Young.

Yes, 'tis as I predicted—there you sit.

Expecting some smart reliques of wit.

Why, 'tis a delicacy out of season—

Sirs, have some conscience—ladies, hear some reason!

With your accustom'd grace you come to share.
 Your humble actor's annual bill of fare :
 But for wit, take it how you will, I tell you,
 All have not Falstaff's brains that have his belly !
 Wit is not all men's money : when you've bought it
 Look at your lot—you're trick'd—who could have thought it ?
 Read it, 'tis folly : court it, a coquette :
 Wed it, a libertine—you're fairly met.
 No sex, age, country, character, nor clime,
 No rank commands it : it obeys no time :
 Fear'd, lov'd, and hated ; prais'd, ador'd, and curs'd ;
 The very best of all things, and the worst :
 From this extreme to that for ever hurl'd,
 The idol and the outlaw of the world.
 In France, Spain, England, Italy, and Greece,
 The joy, plague, pride, and foot-ball of caprice.

Is it in that man's face, who looks so wise,
 With lips half-open'd, and with half-shut eyes ?
 Silent grimace ! Flows it from this man's tongue,
 With quaint conceits and punning quibbles hung ?
 A nauseous counterfeit ! Hark ! now I hear it—
 Rank infidelity ! I cannot bear it.
 See where her tea-table *Vanessa* spreads !
 A motley groupe of heterogeneous heads
 Gathers around : the goddess in a cloud
 Of incense sits amidst the adoring crowd,
 So many smiles, nods, whispers, she dispenses,
 Instead of five, you'd think she'd fifteen senses ;
 Alike impatient all at once to shine,
 Eager they plunge in wit's unfathom'd mine ;
 Deep underneath the stubborn ore remains
 The paltry tin breaks up, and mocks their pains.

Ask wit of me ! Oh, monstrous ! I declare,
 You might as well ask it of my Lord Mayor :
 Require it in an Epilogue ! a road
 As track'd and trodden as a birth-day ode ;
 Oh ! rather turn to those malicious elves,
 Who see it in no mortal but themselves ;
 Our gratitude is all we have to give,
 And what we trust your candour will receive.

There is some vivacity in these lines, but they are inferior to what Cumberland probably thought them by his admitting them into the pages of his *Memoirs*. The play to which they belonged was the last office of friendship he had any opportunity of performing towards Henderson, who died soon after in the full vigour of his talents and the meridian of his fame.

It was during his abode at Tunbridge Wells that Cumberland gradually composed and progressively published his *Observer*, a body of Essays which, though it will never rank his name upon an equality with Steele, Addison, and Johnson, confers upon him a fair title to take his station by the side of Colman, Lloyd, Cambridge, Moore, Hawkesworth, and Chesterfield. These papers were not published as those of his predecessors were, in daily or weekly numbers, but in volumes successively brought forth as a sufficient number of Essays had accumulated to form them. They have lately been incorporated into a complete edition of the *British Essayists*, and may therefore, as Cumberland justly observes, be regarded "as fairly enrolled amongst the standard classics of our native language."

Johnson produced his *Ramblers* with very little assistance from contemporary wits; but Cumberland wrote his *Observer* without any. The different powers of the two writers, however, may be easily ascertained from a very slight inspection

of their topics. Johnson drew solely from the stores of his own mind. His imagination quickened into perpetual growth objects of discussion; he seized upon an ordinary subject, and by the energy of his language, the richness of his fancy, the fertility of his allusions, and, above all, by the deep insight into human nature which he possessed, he so decorated and enforced it, that had novelty lent her aid, she could scarcely have added another attraction. He derived little help from books, and seldom extended his essays by quotation. They were short also, and it did not often happen that the topic was pursued through successive numbers, for the quickness of his invention was such that he seldom needed to protract a disquisition by a languid iteration of ideas. His *Rambler* consists of two hundred and eight papers, and he discharges all the favours he received by the acknowledgement of six out of this number.

Cumberland's *Observer* contains as great, if not a greater, quantity of matter, and it comprises only one hundred and fifty-two papers. Of these, more than one-third is compiled from other books. They consist of critical researches into ancient writers, accompanied with copious extracts; of brief accounts of philosophers and poets derived from sources familiar to the learned; and of historical relations which require little other labour than that of writing down the facts retained in the memory. Those papers which are original are expanded into unusual copiousness, and are some-

times pursued through several successive essays. They were written too at distant intervals of time, while Johnson's were produced by the necessity of stated and periodical labour within the space of two years.

From this comparison (honourable indeed to Cumberland, for with him alone can it be made, all our other essayists having been associated together in their respective labours,) two conclusions may be inferred ; one, that Johnson possessed an extraordinary rapidity of conception, accompanied with a rapidity of execution as extraordinary : the other, that Cumberland, though he had, perhaps, no less rapidity of execution than Johnson, was far beneath him in that intellectual fruitfulness by which topics are not only elicited but afterwards pursued, and embellished with all the brightest ornaments of fancy, or enforced with all the weightiest arguments of reason.

The most conspicuous part of these papers, and that which Cumberland seems to have regarded as his happiest effort, is the inquiry instituted into the history of the Greek writers, particularly of the comic poets now lost. " I am vain enough," says he, " to believe no such collection of the scattered extracts, anecdotes, and remains of those dramatists is any where else to be found ;" and in another part of his *Memoirs*, he quotes, with manifest exultation, the following panegyric from the pen of Mr. Walpole, of Trinity College, Cambridge.

“ Aliunde quoque haud exiguum ornamentum huic volumini accessit, siquidem Cumberlandius nostras amicè benevolèque permisit, ut versiones suas quorundam fragmentorum, exquisitas sane illas, miràque elegantia conditas et commendatas huc transferrem.”

In writing these erudite papers, he was greatly assisted by the marginal annotations upon the authors by his grandfather Bentley, some of whose books he received from his uncle (Dr. Richard Bentley) and among them many of the writers whose works he afterwards illustrated in the *Observer*. That these essays, indeed, deserve every praise which so much diligence, learning, and skilful criticism can obtain, I will not deny; but they will oftener be commended than read.

It is deemed unlucky to stumble on the threshold, but Cumberland has done so. I do not believe, indeed, that it would be possible to produce, from any writer of the last century, a paragraph so feebly involved as that with which the first number of the *Observer* commences. The reader wanders through it as in a maze; he finds himself at the end, at last, but wonders how he came there; he attempts to look back and disentangle the path he pursued, and beholds only inextricable confusion. I know nothing that resembles this initial paragraph, except it be some of the prolixly concatenated sentences of Gauden; but his involutions are amply redeemed by a richness

of imagination which scatters the brightest flowers over the palpable confusion.

The purport of his undertaking was, as he informs us, "to tell his readers what he had observed of men and books in the most amusing manner he was able." This, indeed, was an unambitious claim, and to which I think he established a sufficient right in the progress of his labours.

Before delivering a general opinion upon this work, I wish to make some desultory observations upon particular passages, and in which I shall hope to consult the reader's pleasure and advantage.

Cumberland knew and had felt the advantages of being educated by a mother of more than ordinary literature; and it may therefore justly excite our wonder to find him ridiculing the possession, as well as the affectation, of knowledge in a female. Numbers five, six, and seven, are devoted to this purpose, and with as much success as the undertaking deserved. In *Calliope* it is the abuse of reading and intellectual pleasures which is exhibited, though the author's intention was evidently to render odious every female acquirement which aspired beyond those of domestic utility.

I have already animadverted, in the forty-first page of this work, upon that narrow policy which would exclude, from the fair regions of knowledge, one half of the rational creation, by reducing it to

such abject insignificance, that nothing but the instinctive appetites of the other half could rescue it from merited contempt and ignominy. By what fatality it is that men, who know the enjoyments of intellect, who know how much our moral nature is refined by the refinement of our minds, and who know, also, that mental superiority is the final scale of admeasurement by which all human excellence is adjusted, should be found so willing to depreciate that quality in the female sex which they so justly vaunt in themselves, I am unable to conjecture. Perhaps, indeed, it is the jealousy of dominion that influences them; and like some modern statesmen, who argue that men, to be governed, should be kept in salutary ignorance, they think they could not act the tyrant's part so easily as they now do, if their victims, with increased knowledge, had an increased consciousness of their own rights and privileges. From some such debased maxim they probably act, and the consequence is, that they are the first and most lamentable objects of their own oppression; upon them it recoils with that certainty of evil which it were well for mankind if every oppression produced upon its author.

It may justly provoke our indignation, however, to see Cumberland, who owed so much to the early tuition of a mother, distinguished above her sex by her intellectual attainments, and without which attainments her son must have wanted

those benefits he so feelingly commemorates in his *Memoirs*, striving, though ineffectually, to deride all intellectual pre-eminence in woman. His father was a bishop. Should we not feel something more than wonder if he had endeavoured, in any part of his writings, to traduce the dignities of the church, by exhibiting an episcopal coxcomb, and making the possession of a mitre the impediment to future kindness? Yet, what does he better, than tacitly traduce the acquirements of his mother, when he introduces a female pedant, with the intention to ridicule all learning in women, and exhibits her as forfeiting the hand of an intended husband, unless she burns her books, and engages never to quote a line of poetry while she lives?

The letter from this enlightened lover, where he disclaims his mistress because she reads, is written with a coarseness of argument which does not much assist the cause of ignorance. "No, no," he exclaims, in one part, "heaven defend me from a learned wife!" and in another he asks, "For God's sake what have women to do with learning?"

I will not waste my own and my reader's time, however, by combating such compendious arguments as these; but I will dismiss the subject with recounting the particulars of the lady's reformation. Finding she must either forego her husband or her books, she is made to renounce the latter, and after she is married, she gives the follow-

ing proof of her complete recantation of the dreadful heresy into which she had fallen. It is the concluding paragraph of a supposed letter from her to the *Observer* :

“ I had almost forgot to mention to you a circumstance,” says she, “ that passed as we were sitting at table after dinner, and by which our good friend, the vicar, undesignedly threw me into *confusion* that *was exceedingly distressing*, by repeating some verses from Pope’s Essay on Man, in which he applied to me to help him out in his quotation ; I certainly remembered the passage, and could have supplied his memory with the words ; but Henry being present, and the recollection of what had passed on the subject of poetry, rushing on my mind, at the same time that I thought I saw him glance a significant look at me, threw me into such embarrassment on the sudden, that in vain endeavouring to evade the subject, and being pressed a little unseasonably by the vicar, my spirits also being greatly fluttered by the events of the morning, I could no longer command myself, *but burst into tears, and very narrowly escaped falling into a second hysteric*. Nothing ever equalled the tenderness of Henry on this occasion ; nay, I thought I could discover that he was secretly pleased with the event, as it betrayed a consciousness of former vanities, and seemed to prove that I repented of them ; whatever interpretation he might put upon it, still I

could not bring myself to repeat the verses ; and I believe I shall never utter another couplet whilst I live."

With this extract I may safely abandon the subject. Nothing that I can say could render it more contemptible, for absurdity is carried beyond all power of exaggeration. Surely such dreadful consequences never before followed from the bare thoughts of reciting a few lines of poetry.

Let the weight of this censure, however, be counterbalanced by a praise much higher than could have been bestowed upon the best exertions of Cumberland in defence of female learning. His papers on Christianity shew that he was sincerely impressed with those great truths which he labours, and not unsuccessfully, to support and illustrate. He does not, indeed, penetrate into the obscurities of the solemn question, nor does he dazzle by a subtlety of argument which more frequently belongs to the pride of thinking acutely than to the wish of thinking well ; but he reasons solidly and perspicuously upon some of the most important parts of the divine dispensation, and endeavours to fix the belief of his readers in fundamental truths, by such arguments as nothing but determined scepticism can reject. I have been very deeply gratified in reading these papers, and I am happy in having this opportunity of testifying my gratification. Could I hope also, that my commendation would have any weight, I would

earnestly persuade every one to peruse them who requires either to have his doubts satisfied, or his faith quickened by the satisfaction of his reason.

Cumberland, indeed, like Johnson, has every right to be regarded as a Christian moralist. He missed no incidental occasion, in any of his writings, to uphold the interests of religion, and he employed his pen specifically for the same purpose. Besides the papers to which I have just alluded, he produced his pamphlet entitled "A few plain reasons why we should believe in Christ, and adhere to his religion;" he wrote also many sermons which were preached, and he sometimes employed his leisure hours in versifying the psalms. These things should be remembered, and remembered to his honour.

I know not what were Cumberland's notions of political liberty; he seems, indeed, to have had none that were very precise. In No. 21, of the *Observer*, he regards as "one of the greatest evils of the time," and "as replete with foreign and domestic mischief," the right of publishing parliamentary debates. And why does he think so? Because "our orators speak pamphlets, and the senate is turned into a theatre." An admirable reason it must be confessed. If, however, he had duly reflected upon the nature of the English constitution, and upon that reciprocity of understanding which ought to exist between the people and their representatives, he would have perceived that no

mode could be devised better calculated to secure that end, than the publicity of parliamentary proceedings. The nation delegates a trust, a most important trust; and shall it not know how that trust has been exercised? The principles and conduct of a member are now examined and understood by every man in the kingdom; and when, by a dissolution of the parliament, he is sent back to his constituents, they have the power of withholding their votes if he has betrayed their interest, and of electing another in whose integrity they can better confide.

But this could seldom be done, if there were no direct channel by which the course of his proceedings might be manifested. They could act only from vague reports, and would always be liable to act with injustice. What is the consequence also of this public scrutiny which is thus exercised over every member of parliament? That which must ever be productive of the greatest welfare to the nation. The members discharge their high office with that consciousness of being watched, which often makes a man honest in practice whose principles are dishonest. If he have any ambition to retain his station, if he glory in the rank it confers upon him, and fear to lose it, he will act with that circumspection, with that effective integrity, (knowing that he acts in the observance of his constituents), which, by testifying his value and fitness, may secure to him a continuance of his

post. All this he will be more likely to do, while the proceedings of parliament are open to the inspection of the country, than if they were hidden from it. Let us not believe that every man has that stubborn fidelity of soul which can resist all the attacks of temptation, disguised under the seducing forms of titles, influence, and wealth, or that he will retire uncorrupted from a contest, with no other compensation than the gratulations of an approving conscience.

Cumberland, perhaps, wished that the members of parliament should enjoy the same political immunity, the same freedom from controul, the same security from reproach and ridicule, which he would willingly have claimed for the members of Parnassus, and especially for himself; but, in my opinion, whenever the day comes that the British legislature deliberates with closed doors, that day will be the signal for the extinction of British liberty. The great moral engine of public opinion, that tribunal to which every public man should be amenable, will be destroyed, and on its ruins will be erected a mysterious tyranny, which will bow down the necks of my countrymen to the dust, without, perhaps, perpetrating any overt act of despotism, flagrant enough to rouse them to resistance. The most dangerous, indeed, of all attacks on freedom, are those which imperceptibly sap its foundations; where nothing is seen to fall till the last support is silently undermined, and

the whole fabric rushes to instantaneous destruction.

Among the narrations which are included in this work, that of *Melissa* (Nos. 23 and 24), may be distinguished. It is well written, and contains some natural display of character ; but many parts of it seem to have been suggested by Moliere's *Precieuses Ridicules*.

How easy it is to deliver maxims of prudence, but how difficult, sometimes, to adopt them. It is amusing, indeed, to observe with what philosophical apathy, Cumberland councils the actors (in No. 29), to endure the attacks incident to their profession, while we remember with how little apathy he bore the attacks incident to his own. The whole paper may be pronounced a severe comment upon his own practice. Why did not he use that dignified forbearance which he so vehemently recommends ? Why did not he practise that principle which he quotes from Tacitus in these words : *Spreta exolescunt si irascere, agnita videntur* ? and why did he not adopt the judicious observation of Addison, as the rule of his own conduct ? The cause may be found in the well known replication of the Grecian sage, who, when asked what was the easiest thing to do, answered, "*To give advice.*"

In conformity with that benevolence of principle which led Cumberland to cast a radiance round the dramatic characters of an Irishman and a Scotchman, he has endeavoured, in the *Ob-*

server, to exalt the depressed and persecuted *Jews*, though he once (as I have instanced) concurred to support the degradation in which they were sunk. To this object he devotes nine papers, and in the character of *Abraham Abrahams*, has exhibited an individual endowed with the most amiable and attractive qualities. I willingly hope that they are not imaginary; but the conclusion of the following paragraph from his *Memoirs*, seems to imply that Cumberland found them less deserving of his philanthropy than he had fancied them to be.

“ I take credit to myself,” says he “ for the character of *Abraham Abrahams*; I wrote it upon principle, thinking it high time that something should be done for a persecuted race. I seconded my appeal to the charity of mankind by the character of *Sheva*, which I copied from this of *Abrahams*. The public prints gave the *Jews* credit for their sensibility, in acknowledging my well-intended services; my friends gave me joy of honorary presents, and some even accused me of ingratitude for not making public my thanks of their munificence. I will speak plainly on this point; I do most heartily wish they had flattered me with some token, however small, of which I might have said, *this is a tribute to my philanthropy*, and delivered it down to my children, as my beloved father did to me his badge of favour from the citizens of Dublin; but not a word from the lips, not a line did I

ever receive from the pen of any Jew, though I have found myself in company with many of their nation ; and in this, perhaps, the gentlemen are quite right, whilst I had formed expectations that were quite wrong ; for if I have said for them only what they deserve, why should I be thanked for it ? But if I said more, much more, than they deserve, can they do a wiser thing than hold their tongues ?”

There is at least as much asperity as candour in the conclusion of this paragraph, and Cumberland evidently thought the Jews were bound, by common gratitude, to reward their voluntary champion.

In No. 50, there is an attempt to illustrate the modern mode of theatrical criticism, by an imaginary inquiry into the tragedy of *Othello*, supposed to be written the day after its first performance. The idea is ingenious, but the merit of invention does not belong to Cumberland ; at least, a similar conception occurred to another writer, and was reduced to practice some years before the appearance of his *Observer*.

This writer was Mr. Pinkerton, who published some verses in 1782, called “ Rimes,” and which he believed to be poetry. The critics thought otherwise, however, and told him so ; but he was as little qualified to remain tranquil beneath the lash as Cumberland could be. By some accident, the volume arrived at a second edition, and Mr. Pinkerton appeared armed for encounter with his

opponents. In his advertisement he calls them all dunces, but makes no attempt to prove them so; he utters the filthiest abuse, and deems it humour; he dwells with the most offensive egotism upon his own praises, and calls it a vindication of himself. He does more also. To shame his enemies, and to convince mankind that they are a race of hopeless blockheads, he gives a translation from a presumed Greek MS. "reposited in a leaden box, and found in an ancient dunghill," which proves to be a critique upon the first Pythian ode of Pindar, and is written with as much vulgarity and silliness as Mr. Pinkerton could devise; this was to assure the world that modern critics wrote with vulgarity and silliness; he supposes, also, another critique to have been found (in the ruins of Herculaneum, and forming the cover to a pie), upon some of Horace's odes written just after their production, and distinguished only for feeble malice and abortive wit; nay, he makes a third discovery, of some critical remarks upon Dryden's ode, which surpass, in all that is despicable and insignificant, either of the preceding artificial antiquities. If the reader will forgive me for polluting my pages with such ineffable nonsense, he may be satisfied of what I say by reading the following paragraphs, which comprise the whole of this bastard progeny of resentment and dullness. It is supposed to be copied from a MS. dated May 16, 1701.

“ *Cryticall Remarques upon Mr. Dryden’s Odd called Alexandre’s Feust. By Burneby Burman, Clarke off the Parishe of Cammerwell, A.M. A.S.S.*

“ *Abracadabra. De profundis clamavi. Poete nascitur non fit. Orator fit non nascitur. Quæ masculis tribuuntur mascula sunt* (copied from bookes, so am shure they are richt spelt). *I quot these verses of the Greeke poette, Curteous Reder, to shew thee thet I ame not unquallified for the tasque I have taken in hande, but on the contrarie am embued with pulite learninge.*

“ *This poeme beginneth thus: ‘Twas at the royal feste, &c.’ Hou vulgar is this! It resembleth a drinking songe. The author seemeth not to knowe the difference betwixt an Odd and a Songe, which is as followethe, viz. A long Odd is a short Songe, & a long Songe is a short Odd. Now an Odd should never be in a common stoile, but as we say in an odd stoile. Q. E. D.*

“ *That lyne, ‘so should desert in arms be crowned,’ is off verie bad example. If desertors be crowned, trew souldiers must be whipt in their place. So what is sauce for a guse is sauce for a gaunder.*

“ *Happy, happy, happy paire, might have been spaired thus, Happy 3 pair, which would have saved wryting the word happy thryce over. Qu. If it should not be NAPPY?*

“ *‘Timotheus placed on high,’ read PERCHED on high. For ‘flying fingers,’ we ought surely to rede ‘frying fingers.’ Annie flying fingers I never*

chaunced to see; Frying fingers are common in playing on a wind instrument such as the ancient harpe was.

“ ‘A dragon’s Fiery form belyed the God.’ If a dragon gave a God the lye he ocht to have hadde his nose pulled, fiery as he was.

“ In the IV handsaw we reade of slaying the slain thrice, a thing in my judgment not altogether posibil. We likewise rede the word ‘fallen’ five times over. An egregious absurditie! For if a man is once fallen he cannot fall again till he has got on his legges. Now legges are not once mentioned.

“ In No. VI. we meet with ghosts, (Jesu protect mee, for as I lyve I saw a ghost last nyght at Peter Haynes’s barne door), ‘that in battle were slayne.’ A ghost slayne! O heaven, what nonsense! The conclusion is mighty prettie. But upon the whole, this piece is not equal to anie of the noble productions of a Mr. Thomas Durfey. Amen.”

If the reader’s disgust do not overpower his benevolence he will perhaps smile at this harmless and inefficient nonsense: but nothing else can save it from utter contempt. Many who are acquainted with Mr. Pinkerton’s present respectability in literature, may be surprised that he was ever capable of writing any thing so absurd; the book which contains it is deservedly scarce, and I am willing to believe, therefore, that as a curiosity, my insertion of it in these pages will be forgiven.

It is evident, however, that when Cumberland

employed a similar mode of ridiculing the illiberality of modern critics, he had either adopted it from Mr. Pinkerton, or fallen into an accidental coincidence of idea with him. Which was the case is not worth inquiring: for though he has succeeded better than his predecessor, he has left much to be done by any ingenious follower.

The true mode, as it seems to me, in which this topic might be humorously enforced, would be to select any composition of acknowledged general merit, but containing some real deficiencies; to specify these deficiencies only, without adverting to the superior passages; to dwell upon them with every aggravation of ridicule and severity; to exhibit them as the character of the whole production, and from them to pronounce a general opinion of the work itself. This would be an accurate picture of the common process of contemporary periodical criticism: but instead of this Cumberland has advertised upon those things which are not faulty, and on which censure is bestowed therefore with manifest injustice.

As I have not scrupled to quote from Mr. Pinkerton, it will be but justice to Cumberland that his treatment of a similar subject should be opposed to that writer's:

"Let us suppose," says he, "for a moment, that Shakspeare was now an untried poet, and opened his career with any one of his best plays;

the next morning ushers into the world the following, or something like the following critique.

“ ‘ Last night was presented, for the first time, a tragedy called *Othello, or the Moor of Venice*, avowedly the production of Mr. William Shakspeare the actor. This gentleman’s reputation in his profession is of the *mediocre* sort, and we predict that his present tragedy will not add much to it in any way. *Mediocribus esse poetis*, the reader can supply the rest,—*verb. sap.* As we profess ourselves to be friendly to the players in general, we shall reserve our fuller critique of this piece, till after its third night; for we *hold it very stuff of the conscience*, (to use Mr. Shakspeare’s own words) not to war against the poet’s muse: though we might apply the author’s quaint conceit to himself—

‘ Who steals *his* purse, steals trash: ‘tis something; nothing.’

“ ‘ In this last reply we agree with Mr. Shakspeare that ‘tis *nothing*, and our philosophy tells us *ex nihilo, nihil fit*.

“ ‘ For the plot of this tragedy the most we can say is, that it is certainly of the *moving* sort, for it is here and there and every where; a kind of theatrical *hocus pocus*; a creature of the pye-ball breed, like Jacob’s muttons, between a black ram and a white ewe. It brought to our mind the children’s game of *I love my love with an A*—with

this difference only, that the young lady in this play loves her love with a B—*because he is black*.
—*Risum teneatis?*

“ ‘ There is one *Iago*, a bloody-minded fellow, who stabs men in the dark behind their backs; now this is a thing we hold to be most vile and ever to be abhorred. *Othello* smothers his white wife in bed; our readers may think this a shabby kind of an action for a general of his high calling; but we beg leave to observe that it shews some spirit at least in *Othello* to attack the enemy in her *strong quarters* at once. There was an incident of a *pocket handkerchief*, which *Othello* called out for most lustily, and we were rather sorry that his lady could not produce it, as we might then have seen one *handkerchief* at least employed in the tragedy. There was some vernacular phrases, which caught our ear, such as where the black damns his wife twice in a breath—*Oh damn her—damn her!* which we thought savoured more of the language spoken *at* the door than *within* the doors of the theatre: but when we recollect that the author used to amuse a leisure hour with calling up gentlemen’s coaches after the play was over, before he was promoted to take a part in it, we could readily account for old habits. Though we have seen many gentlemen and ladies kill themselves on the stage, yet we must give the author credit for the new way in which his hero puts himself out of the world: *Othello* having smothered

his wife, and being taken up by the officers of the state, prepares to despatch himself and escape from the hands of justice ; to bring this about he begins a story about his killing a man in Aleppo, which he illustrates, *par exemple*, by stabbing himself, and so winds up his story and his life in the same moment. The author made his appearance in the person of one Brabantio, an old man, who makes his first entry from a window ; this occasioned some risibility in the audience : the part is of an inferior kind, and Mr. Shakspeare was more indebted to the exertions of his brethren, than to his own, for carrying the play through. Upon the whole we do not think the passion of jealousy, on which the plot turns, so proper for tragedy as comedy, and we would recommend to the author, if his piece survives its nine nights, to cut it down to a farce, and serve it up to the public, *mic cumá salis*, in that shape. After this specimen of Mr. William Shakspeare's tragic powers, we cannot encourage him to pursue his attempts upon Melpomene ; for there is a good old proverb which we would advise him to bear in mind—*ne sutor ultra crepidam*. If he applies to his friend *Ben*, he will turn it into English for him.' "

Though this as far surpasses Mr. Pinkerton's wit and humour, as Mr. Pinkerton surpasses most men in the power of patient and laborious application, it is yet very inferior to what may be done.

We have no just exhibition in it of what is really the practice of modern criticism, for no newspaper writer would discuss the merits of such a tragedy as *Othello* (supposing it to be now first produced), in this manner. But Cumberland remembered what had been said of *his* tragedies, and in the tumult of resentment forgot that he was not a Shakspeare.

Some of the incidental narratives in the *Observer* are pleasingly written ; and Cumberland was accused of having taken many of them from Spanish authors. The charge, however, he solemnly denies, and asserts his entire and undiminished claim to every thing in the volumes which is not an avowed quotation.

If the *Observer* be considered as a body of *Essays*, upon life, upon manners, and upon literature, it will shrink in comparison with those produced by Steele, by Addison, and by Johnson. Cumberland was capable of imagining characters ; but he does not seem to have had much power of observing those qualities in individuals of which character is compounded. That which was obtrusively visible in a man, he could seize and portray ; but the less obvious modes of thought, the secret bias, the prevailing but obscure motives to conduct, were seldom within his reach. He could invent, and give the invention an air of reality : upon a slender basis of truth he could engraft an agreeable fiction, in which, however, the traces

of fancy would still be so discernible that the reader never mistook them.

In this respect, therefore, he was greatly inferior to either Steele, Addison, or Johnson. They had a quick perception of the follies of mankind, and exhibited, without exaggeration, such a picture of them as none could mistake, and none could view without conviction of its truth. They looked abroad upon life, and observed all its various combinations: they studied man and knew the artifices by which his conduct was obscured. They penetrated through that veil which necessity sometimes, and custom always, impels us to throw round our actions, and they disclosed those hidden qualities which escape the notice of ordinary observation, but which are recognised with instantaneous acquiescence when displayed.

The want of this power in Cumberland is greatly felt by him who reads his essays consecutively; for, being restricted in the limits of his excursions, by inability to avail himself of what wider research would have offered, he is too diffuse upon single incidents and characters, as a man who has not many guineas applies one to its utmost variety of purposes.

In his literary disquisitions, though always inferior to Johnson as a critic, he is often very pleasing and often equal to Addison. His learning, perhaps, sometimes degenerates into pedantry, but he who is rich is apt to display his wealth.

His critical papers are among the most amusing, and he has instituted an ingenious comparison between Massinger's *Fatal Dowry* and Rowe's *Fair Penitent*, in which the brief opinions of Mr. M. Mason (Massinger's editor) are enforced by examples pertinently selected. I wish, however, that his admiration of Cowper had not excited him to an imitation of that nervous and original writer.

In his characters he sometimes exhibited living individuals. I have already alluded to his introduction of Johnson; and in the same number, I imagine his actress to be Mrs. Siddons. *Gorgon*, the self-conceited painter of the deformed and terrible, (No. 98), was probably meant for Fuseli: but if so, there is more willingness to wound than power.

There is nothing in these papers by which the most delicate reader can be displeased, which is a praise that cannot be wholly given either to the *Spectator* or *Guardian*, whose zeal to reform certain exposures of the female person often led them to illustrations not exactly within the limits of decency. This commendation I bestow the more willingly upon Cumberland, because the practice of such decorum was not habitual in him, for in some of his writings he only needed to employ a corresponding licentiousness of expression to rank with the corrupters of public morals.

I regret that he has asserted his claim to purity of style, with so much confidence as the following

sentence implies. "If my critics," says he, "be not too candid I am encouraged to believe, that in these volumes of *Henry* and in those of the *Observer*, I have succeeded in what I laboured to effect with all my care, a *simple, clear, harmonious style*; which, taken as a model, may be followed without leading the novice either into turgidity or obscurity, holding a middle tone of period, neither swelling into high flown metaphor, nor sinking into inelegant and unclassical rusticity. Whether or not I have succeeded, I certainly have attempted to reform and purify my native language from certain false pedantic prevalencies, which were much in fashion when I first became a writer: I dare not say with those, whose flattery might mislead me, that I have accomplished what I aimed at, but if I have done something towards it, I may say with Pliny,—"*Posteris an aliqua cura nostri, nescio. Nos certe meremur ut sit aliqua; non dicam ingenio; id enim superbum; sed studio, sed labore, sed reverentia posterorum.*"

The secret consciousness of success is concealed with too little artifice in this passage. He affects to doubt, what he strongly believed, and his modest humility is no other than a gentle invitation to the world to force upon him the truth which he seems to question with so much simplicity and candour. I confess I should have preferred an open and unequivocal declaration of what I think his real sentiments were, to this prudish coquetry, this coy

frisking about the subject, like a young girl who protests that nobody shall kiss her, and struggles against the attempt only that it may be urged with greater briskness. The obvious import of the paragraph is this; that Cumberland reformed our style, by writing, himself, in a "simple, clear, and harmonious" manner.

But, I have already observed, that in aiming at simplicity and ease, he too commonly fell into meanness and imbecility: and as he has chosen to refer to the *Observer* as the criterion of his own assumption, from the *Observer* I will select the proofs of mine.

A style that is clear, simple, and harmonious, must neither be debased by colloquial phrases nor involved in its sentences till an inextricable confusion pervades them. Its clearness or perspicuity will depend upon a skilful use of precise and definite terms judiciously collocated. The writer must fully comprehend himself before he can be comprehended by others, and he must distinctly weigh the import of the words he employs. He will then be intelligible.

Simplicity arises from many of those circumstances which constitute perspicuity, but in addition to what exclusively belongs to the latter, must be added a lucid construction of the sentences and of each subordinate member. All expletives must be rejected, all implication of distinct propositions, and all endeavours at point, antithesis

or specious glitter. The words should be verna-
cular, as far as possible, and seldom such as are
removed from familiar use, yet not degenerating
into those that are colloquial. The employment
of all figurative modes of composition is hostile
to simplicity, which aims, or should aim, at com-
municating ideas with easy and unconstrained
elegance.

Harmony in writing results partly from the prac-
tice of these methods, and partly from the influ-
ence of a correct ear, to which the slightest disso-
nance is offensive. To effect an harmonious style,
much attention must be paid to the disposition of
the sentences: they must neither be broken with
uniform brevity, nor expanded into tedious pro-
lixity; a skilful intermixture is what should be
attempted. Nor, if we would write harmoniously,
must we disdain to watch the position even of sin-
gle words, according to which it will greatly de-
pend whether a sentence reads with graceful flu-
ency, or halts upon the tongue with an irregula-
rity of cadence. Minute as these things may ap-
pear, they must not be beneath his attention who
aims at producing an harmonious style.

In all these requisites, I know no English writer
who has approached nearer to the perfection of
them than Goldsmith. Of him alone, perhaps, it
may be said, that his style is harmonious without
affectation, easy without weakness, and perspi-
cuous without vulgarity. My opinion of his dic-

tion I have given on a recent occasion*, and will repeat it here, if an author may be allowed to quote from himself; of which, however, the practice of the age gives precedent.

“ In the structure of his sentences he has greater harmony, and greater variety than Addison. In his language he is more scrupulous. He does not offend so often by colloquial phrases or obsolete combinations. His prose is not so feeble, nor so coldly regular. In felicity of expression, when intended to convey a plain and simple idea, or a natural emotion of common minds, he is, perhaps, unequalled.

“ A very conspicuous merit of Goldsmith’s prose is the lucid arrangement of his sentences.— Every word and every period appear to be just where they ought to be. We have no evidence that he composed slowly, or that he laboured much to correct what he had once written: and such perspicuity of arrangement is, therefore, the more remarkable in a man whose ideas in conversation were so perplexed and so confused.

“ Harmony, simplicity, clearness, and propriety, in relation to the matter, are the predominant qualities of Goldsmith’s general style; but as he was also capable of elevation, I may add to the above, occasional dignity and energy of language.

* In “The Contemplatist: a series of Essays upon Morals and Literature.” 1810.

As a model to be studied, I should prefer it to Addison's, for it is more pure."

How remote Cumberland's practice was from his own opinion, let me now proceed to shew. I shall not enter into minute illustrations of his errors, but select such as will testify for themselves.

I have already mentioned the singularly involved paragraph with which the *Observer* commences, and which certainly ought not to have been found in the pages of a writer who aspired to harmony and perspicuity of style. Nor ought the following to belong to him who believed that he wrote with purity and simplicity.

"I am anxious that I may neither make my first advances with the stiff grimace of a dancing-master, nor with the too familiar air of a *self-important*." (No. 1.)

To the introduction of new terms, when unnecessary, every lover of the language should oppose himself. If all writers are to be allowed that capricious innovation, where will the influx stop, and when will the language be fixed? Our dictionaries, like our almanacks, must be annual, while this laxity is tolerated.

"Several of our diurnal essayists have contrived, under the veil of fiction, to *hook in* something commendatory of themselves." (No. 3.)

"I was the more disgusted, when I perceived

that by the nonsensical *zigzaggery* of the road, &c." (No. 4.)

Are these the phrases of a man distinguished for simplicity and harmony of style?

In the following sentence the word *tawdry* is employed as synonymous with meretricious; a sense which it has not in any writer whom I should regard as an authority, but one in which Cumberland frequently employs it.

"I mean trials for adultery, the publishers of which are not content with setting down every thing *verbatim* from their short-hand records, which the scrutinizing necessity of law draws out by pointed interrogatory, but they are also made to allure the curiosity of the passenger by *tawdry* engravings, in which the heroine of the tale is displayed in effigy, and the most indecent scene of her amours selected as an eye-trap to attract the youth of both sexes; and by debauching the morals of the rising generation, keep up the stock in trade, and feed the market with fresh cases for the commons, and fresh supplies for the retailers of indecency."

I have extracted the whole of this passage, because the censure which it conveys is as applicable now, as it could possibly have been when Cumberland wrote it. I fear, indeed, it is more so. No man can walk the streets of this metropolis without shuddering as he beholds the violation of public decency and morals in those wretches

who earn a disgraceful livelihood by publishing circumstantial accounts of all trials that relate to the most abhorred of human crimes. Nay, they are not satisfied with such opportunities as the present guilt of individuals affords ; they rummage into the records of adultery and vice—they drag to light the forgotten memorials of past infamy—they decorate them with flagitious ornaments—and they expose them to sale with a daring contempt of all decorum. Their transgressions continue without reproof or punishment, and our wives and daughters are polluted by the readiest channel of contamination, as they walk along the public streets ; the ignorant are initiated into depravity ; and the unwary are seduced to the consciousness of offences which, from knowing, they soon learn perhaps to perpetrate.

O proceres censure opus est, an haruspice nobis ?

We have among us a self-constituted society, who have distinguished themselves by many encroachments upon the humbler comforts of the poor, without daring to attack the strong holds of the rich : they have excited very general indignation and contempt by the fanatic zeal with which they seek to oppress the unresisting, and drag petty delinquents to the bar of justice, while their sanctity of heart does not rouse them to arrest the career of haughty and patrician vice ; they have visited, with their terrors, the barber's shop and the

apple-stalls of defenceless old women ; nay, they have fulminated their anathemas against the indecencies of sculpture, and have commanded the nakedness of chubby boys at the door of a snuff-shop to be cloathed. These things they have done with an acrimonious perseverance which a better cause might have dignified, if indeed any cause can dignify the use of hired spies, who fawn about their victims only to betray them. I have long wished them a better office, after having first wished them extinct, as I ever must every species of inquisitorial tyranny ; and now I propose one to them. There is no one who would not rejoice if they exerted their power to suppress these most offensive nuisances ; if they shielded, from contamination, the minds of youth and the innocence of virtue ; and if they punished with deserved severity beings whose conduct no punishment, perhaps, can adequately reach. Let them do this, and merit the applause of every good man ; let them continue their petty vexations, and receive the contempt of every liberal one.

In returning to my illustration of Cumberland's verbal inaccuracies, I must observe that I have omitted to specify those negligences which I had already animadverted on in examining the *West Indian*, as the repetition would be useless ; and I have also omitted the enumeration of many others, because I do not wish to load my pages with the easiest, and perhaps the meanest, of all

critical exertion. Yet, having entered upon the office, I must discharge it with what brevity and propriety I can.

In Number 21, I find another innovation (the verb to *locate*,) which Cumberland has employed on various occasions in the course of his writings. We do not want it, however; and I reckon it therefore a superfluous violation of the standard terms of the language.

“An arch fellow brought a *furious* large fir apple to the famous lawyer, &c.” (No. 52.)

Cumberland could not have supported this vulgar use of the epithet *furious*, by any authority: but I will not say as much of the following term, though it is unequivocally mean and colloquial.

“He began to turn over all the resources of his invention for some happy *fetch*.” (No. 88.)

I find so few of Cumberland's sentences constructed with harmony or perspicuity, that in selecting one or two in support of my assertion, I need be at no other trouble than to open the volume, and copy the first that presents itself. The fact is, that to me his style appears remarkable for a peculiar looseness and obscurity; and he seems, when he began a sentence, never to have known how he should end it, but to have continued writing till he found himself at the conclusion of a paragraph, or of an idea. They certainly are not artificially composed; they resemble rather the desultory in-

coherence of conversation, where a man chats at his ease, excogitates an opinion and tells it, with what periphrasis, and pauses, and tautologies, indolence or necessity may force upon him. But how different from this were the polished periods of Goldsmith, and how preferable the energetic ones of Johnson.

In the following paragraph (actually selected without any seeking,) the reader will have a complete exemplification of every thing that I have said. I shall put in italics all that is superfluous, or otherwise liable to censure.

“ I must not omit to tell *you*, that to my infinite comfort *it turned out, that* my precautions after the death of the Monk were effectual for preventing any mischief to the head of my family, who still preserves his rank, title, and estate, unsuspected; and although I was outlawed *by name*, time hath now wrought such a change in my person, and the affair hath so died away *in men's memories*, that I trust I am in security from any future machinations in that quarter: still I hold it just to my family, and prudent towards myself, to continue my precautions; upon the little fortune I raised in Smyrna, with some aids I have occasionally received from the head of our house, who is my nephew, and several profitable commissions for the sale of Spanish wool, I live contentedly, though humbly, as you see, and I have besides wherewithal (blessed be God!) to be of some use

use *and assistance* to my fellow-creatures.”—
(No. 44.)

All the words which are in italics, might have been omitted, without any injury to the meaning of the author, as he wrote the paragraph. Its feeble protraction, its involution of clauses, and unskilful construction, are sufficiently evident: but, to make it more so, (as I do not hold it a very daring undertaking to attempt a verbal improvement of Cumberland,) I will now shew with what brevity and force the same ideas might have been communicated. This will be the true test, both of the thing itself, and of my competency to dispute that excellence in writing which Cumberland assumed to himself.

“ I must not omit to tell, that, to my infinite comfort, my precautions, after the monk’s death, effectually prevented any mischief to the head of my family, who still preserves, unsuspected, his rank, title, and estate. I was outlawed; but time has wrought such a change in my person, and the affair has so died away, that I trust I need fear no future machinations from that quarter; but I hold it just to my family, and prudent towards myself, to continue my precautions. Upon the little fortune which I raised in Smyrna, with some aids I have occasionally received from my nephew, who is the head of our house, and several profitable commissions for the sale of Spanish wool, I live contentedly, though, as you see, humbly. I have

enough however (and blessed be God!) to be of some assistance to my fellow-creatures."

Let the reader judge. I have not censured with vague and general accusation: I have substantiated my affirmations. I have done more: I have endeavoured to shew how the errors I condemn might have been avoided: I have provoked a comparison, in which I do not expect success, because I have put it in every man's power to deprive me of it by a simple denial; without the necessity of supporting it by evidence.

One more example of a sentence expanded to a paragraph, and I have done.

"I must, therefore, again and again, insist upon it, that there are two sides to every argument, and that it is the natural and unalienable right of man to be heard in support of his opinion; he having first lent a patient ear to the speaker, who maintains sentiments that oppose that opinion: I do humbly apprehend that an overbearing voice, and noisy volubility of tongue, are proofs of a very underbred* fellow; and it is with regret I see society too frequently disturbed in its most delectable enjoyments, by this odious character: I do not see that any man hath á right, by obligation or otherwise, to lay me under a necessity of thinking exactly as he thinks; though I admit that 'from the fulness of the heart the tongue speak-

* Where could Cumberland have found this term? Not in any writer of acknowledged authority.

eth,' I do not admit any superior pretensions it hath to be Sir Oracle from the fulness of the pocket." (No. 84.)

I have forborne here to put in italics the same circumlocutions and defects which I noticed in the former extract; nor shall I weary the reader by recapitulating it in what I may consider a better mode of construction. Such minuteness is not now necessary. It is evident, however, that to a sentence thus copiously diffused, there seems no necessary limit, except the termination of the paper itself, or the accidental division of a paragraph. It may be amusing to see how some of the writers, of the seventeenth century, excelled in *this* kind of harmony and clearness of style. The following example is from a man, of no mean note in his own or the present age.

"A second defect, much contributing to the public detriment, by the non-improvement of scholars when they are well trained in the university, and fit to be transplanted out of those nurseries, (that being set thinner they may spread wider, grow bigger, and bear much more fruit,) is the want of public care and patrociny to prefer and dispose of them so as may be most agreeable to their abilities; many times their modesty much curbs their activity, (like ears of corn and boughs of trees, the more loaden, the more hidden and dejected,) and being wholly destitute of such friends and relations as might put them forward,

they have this to answer any that ask why they stand still till the ninth hour of the day, *because no man hath hired them*, or set them on work, or preferred them; besides this, the swarms or lesser fray of other meaner scholars, who have but a little tincture of learning in comparison, and who, like barnacles or Solerne geese, too soon drop off from the university, betaking themselves to country cures, according as their necessities compel them; these so forestal the markets of parochial livings and church preferments, gaining by their obsequiousness and adherencies, the favour and friendship of such patrons as have any thing worth acceptance in their dispose, that many other good scholars are left to superannuate in their solitudes, to be confined to their muses everlastingly, as if their ears had been bored through and fixed to the college gates or study doors: as Democritus, junior, most elegantly and pathetically deplores this dereliction of rare men in the university, which makes the muses melancholy, and depriving both merit and reward, and the public of that good which these men might do as master builders in God's temple." (*Bishop Gauden's Life of Hooker.*)

When a man gets to the end of a sentence like this, he takes time to breathe, and consider whether he comprehends what he has been reading; he retraces the intricate confusion, and finds nothing to compensate for its obscurity, but the flow-

ers of a rich imagination, which, though scattered about in quaint devices, refresh the mind and gratify the eye. No one, however, ever thought of praising such a style for its harmony or perspicuity.

I should not have pursued this inquiry into the defects of Cumberland's diction, had he not incautiously intimated his belief that it was faultless. When he expressed his opinion that it was a model which could not mislead; that it was simple, clear, and harmonious; and that it was neither inelegant nor unclassical, I thought it my duty to examine his pretensions, and to ascertain their validity. I have done so: and though I have found his practice greatly beneath his own opinion of its excellence, I am willing to believe him sincere, when he professed that his object had been, all his life, to "reform and purify his native language." The task, however, was beyond his power. He has met the common fate of those who labour to effect simplicity of style: he is too often mean and colloquial, when he thinks he is writing with simplicity and elegance. The happy medium between that and turgidity is seldom attained.—Cumberland certainly missed it.

Yet, though I should never venture to propose his compositions as a model for imitation, I am not unconscious that he has written, in general, with fluency and plainness. He seldom endeavours after ornaments; and I imagine it was because he

knew he could not reach them, for when he does strive, it is rarely with success. His prose is equable and familiar, and seldom rises beyond a very ordinary level. I have examined it with a minuteness of verbal criticism to which I should have been tempted by no other motive than his assumption of such perfection as I knew it did not possess: and I now close my remarks upon the *Observer*, with observing, that it has a fair claim to maintain its station among the embodied essayists of the country, and that the name of its author will be known to posterity rather by this than by any other of his productions.

CHAP. XX.

Cumberland's inconsistency in his own statements about himself.—An apt quotation from LA FONTAINE.—Observations upon the controversy between Mr. HAYLEY and Cumberland respecting the life of ROMNEY.—Produces the tragedy of the CARMELITE.—Mrs. SIDDONS and Mr. KEMBLE.—Examination of the CARMELITE.—Cumberland commemorates his friendship for Sir JAMES BLAND BURGESS, Mr. SHARP, and Mr. ROGERS.—Some advice to the latter gentleman on his poetical powers.—Cumberland's daughter declines the interference of these three gentlemen in arranging her father's posthumous papers.

THE inconsistencies into which Cumberland is sometimes betrayed, in speaking of himself, shew with how little certainty any man can hope to preserve the truth even with the most reverential regard for its sanctity. When we write of others, we are in danger of listening too willingly to the voice of envy which whispers in our ears, that censure is but justice; when we write of ourselves, we are exposed to the attacks of every passion, that can obscure the perception of truth and mislead the judgment. La Fontaine has introduced one of his tales with some lines of profound sagacity on this topic:

Je soupconne fort une histoire,
 Quand le heros en est l'auteur ;
 L'amour propre et la vaine gloire
 Rendent souvent l'homme vanteur.
 On fait toujours si bien son compte
 Qu'on tire de l'honneur de tout ce qu'on raconte.

At page 188 of this work, the reader will find that I have adverted to a contradiction in Cumberland's statement of his mode of study. I have there quoted his words, in which he says, " that in all his hours of study, it had been his object, through life, so to *locate* himself as to have little or nothing to distract his attention;" and I contrasted this declaration with the manner in which he confesses that he wrote his comedy of *The Brothers*. But the confusion is still increased in the second volume of his *Memoirs*, p. 204, where, speaking of the ease with which he composed at any hour, or in any place, he affirms that " he had never been accustomed to retire to his study for silence and meditation ;" in fact, his book room, at Tunbridge Wells, was occupied as a bed room, and what books he had occasion to consult he brought down to the common sitting room, where, in company with his wife and family, (neither interrupting them, nor interrupted by them), he wrote the *Observer*, or whatever else he had in hand."

Let the reader reconcile this contrariety of relation as he can ; to me it seems the effect either of negligence, of defective memory, or of a momen-

tary desire, at one time, to assume all the solemnity of studious retirement, and at another, to affect that easy fertility of thought which nothing can obstruct.

Some little controversy having existed between Mr. Hayley and Cumberland, respecting the life of Romney, I shall here briefly advert to it.

In his Memoirs, Cumberland has given a short character of Romney, and has drawn a parallel between him and Reynolds. His opinion of him seems to have been something less than Mr. Hayley's, who appears to have contemplated his friend with an enthusiasm approaching to veneration. In his life of Romney, recently published, he enters into a laboured defence of him, and omits no opportunity, in the progress of his narrative, to shield him from what he considers as the injurious aspersions of Cumberland. Where the truth lies I cannot determine; but Mr. Hayley seems to me to be too often the apologist rather than the biographer of Romney. His failings were in his memory, and the great effort of his pen seems to have been to cover them from public inspection.

Cumberland, who probably loved the man as well as Mr. Hayley could do, wrote with less reserve, told what he thought, and told, perhaps, the truth. When Romney died he gave a brief sketch of his life and character in the European Magazine., To this Mr. Hayley frequently

alludes in his late publication, but it is seldom for any other purpose than to dispute its veracity. He does it, however, without any offensive asperity of language or insinuation, which indeed would have been ill-bestowed upon a man who had proved one of Romney's earliest friends, by endeavouring to bring him before the public at a time when his own diffidence made him shrink from all attempts to force himself into popularity.

Mr. Hayley sometimes quibbles, however, in his friend's defence. Cumberland had said that Romney's was an "inglorious grave," because he died and was buried in a remote part of England. To this epithet Mr. Hayley objects. "Surely," says he, "the talents and the virtues of our departed friend were sufficient to dignify any sepulchre, in which it could be his destiny to rest." There may be much subtlety in this position; but if the ashes of a great man confer dignity upon the spot that contains them, all monumental honours are but superfluous violations of that dignity. Had Alexander been entombed in a dunghill, or Shakspeare quietly inurned beneath a common sewer, mankind would have consented to hold both places in veneration; but their dignity would have existed only in the minds of those who, like Mr. Hayley, confound two notions essentially distinct.

I have already mentioned that Cumberland dedicated his two "Odes" to Romney, which were an unequivocal testimony of his friendship for the

man, and his admiration of the artist. Nor was this the only proof he gave. The following lines contain an elegant tribute to both :

When Gothic rage had put the arts to flight,
And wrapt the world in universal night,
When the dire northern swarm with seas of blood,
Had drown'd creation in a second flood,
When all was void, disconsolate and dark,
Rome in her ashes found one latent spark,
She, not unmindful of her ancient name,
Nurs'd her last hope, and fed the sacred flame ;
Still as it grew, new streams of orient light
Beam'd on the world, and cheer'd the fainting sight ;
Rous'd from the tombs of the illustrious dead,
Immortal science rear'd her mournful head ;
And mourn she shall, to time's extremest hour,
The dire effects of Omar's savage power,
When rigid Amrou's too obedient hand
Made Alexandria blaze at his command ;
Six months he fed the sacrilegious flame
With the stor'd volumes of recorded fame :
There died all memory of the great and good,
Then Greece and Rome were finally subdu'd.

Yet monkish ignorance had not quite effac'd
All that the chissel wrought, the pencil trac'd ;
Some precious reliques of the ancient hoard,
Or happy chance, or curious search restor'd ;
The wond'ring artist kindled as he gaz'd,
And caught perfection from the work he prais'd.

Of painters, then the celebrated race,
Rose into fame with each attendant grace ;
Still, as it spread, the wonder-dealing art
Improv'd the manners and reform'd the heart :
Darkness dispers'd, and Italy became
Once more the seat of elegance and fame.

Late, very late, on this sequester'd isle,
The heav'n descended art was seen to smile ;
Seldom she came to this storm-beaten coast,
And short her stay, just seen, admir'd, and lost .

Reynolds at length, her favourite suitor, bore
 The blushing stranger to his native shore ;
 He by no mean, no selfish motives sway'd
 To public view held forth the liberal maid,
 Call'd his admiring countrymen around,
 Freely declar'd what raptures he had found ;
 Told them that merit would alike impart
 To him or them a passage to her heart.
 Rous'd at the call, all came to view her charms,
 All press'd, all strove to clasp her in their arms ;
 See *Coats*, and *Dance*, and *Gainsborough* seize the spoil ;
 And ready *Mortimer* that laughs at toil ;
 Crown'd with fresh roses graceful *Humphry* stands,
 While beauty grows immortal from his hands ;
Stubbs, like a lion, springs upon his prey,
 With bold eccentric *Wright*, that hates the day :
 Familiar *Zeffany*, with comic art,
 And *West*, great painter of the human heart.
 These, and yet more unnam'd, that to our eyes
 Bid lawns, and groves, and tow'ring mountains rise,
 Point the bold rock, or stretch the bursting sail,
 Smooth the calm sea, or drive th' impetuous gale :
 Some hunt 'midst fruit and flowery wreaths for fame,
 And *Elmer* springs it in the feather'd game.

Apart, and bending o'er the the azure tide,
 With heavenly Contemplation by his side,
 A pensive artist stands—in thoughtful mood,
 With downcast looks he eyes the ebbing flood :
 No wild ambition swells his temperate heart,
 Himself as pure, as patient as his art,
 Nor sullen sorrow, nor intemperate joy,
 The even tenour of his thoughts destroy,
 An undistinguish'd candidate for fame,
 At once his country's glory and its shame ;
 Rouse, then, at length, with honest pride inspir'd,
Romney, advance ! be known, and be admir'd."

In 1784 Cumberland produced his tragedy of
 the *Carmelite*. This drama, when published, he
 dedicated to Mrs. Siddons, and in his *Memoirs*

he repeats the obligations he was under to that matchless actress, then in the day-spring of her fame, and the full bloom of all her talents ; now, no less excellent, but shortly to withdraw from the eyes of applauding multitudes. He mentions, likewise, the assistance which her brother, Mr. Kemble, gave to the performance; who was, at that time, says he, " in the full stature and complete maturity of one of the finest forms that probably was ever exhibited upon a public stage." He too is still among us, nor is there any promise of a successor when he shall see fit to retire. He has trod the stage for many years, during which he has gone beyond all rivalry ; nor do I know the actor now living, whom I could wish to see in any of those characters which I have hitherto seen in Mr. Kemble's hands. His range is not so wide as Garrick's, and they who remember that performer, may think, perhaps, that he does not always reach the same perfection in the same characters, but this is an invidious comparison. Compare Mr. Kemble with his theatrical contemporaries, and who among them can match him at all points ?

I pay this tribute to his excellence very willingly, for I have often been delighted with the display of it. *Once*, such a testimony might have been liable to the imputation of friendly partiality : but Mr. Kemble *knows* that no such imputation can now exist ; and *I hope he knows* why it cannot. For *me* to tell the cause would seem too

much like offering an opportunity for its removal.

It was a natural transition in Cumberland, after commemorating the talents of such an actress and such an actor, to turn, with some asperity, to that degrading folly which once led countless crowds to gaze upon, and applaud, the boyish exhibitions of an unformed youth. Him too, I saw, but never with satisfaction. I could have endured him as a child of very commendable acquirements, but when I saw the ideas and language of Shakspeare committed to his charge, when I heard him whining out the accents of love, without passion, or vociferating the boisterousness of rage, without the capability of feeling what he uttered; when I beheld him vainly striving to pourtray the inmost workings of the heart, by cold and artificial mimicry, I turned disgusted from the profanation, and lamented that degeneracy of public taste, or that voracious appetite for novelty, which could patiently endure any thing so preposterous. The delusion, however, is gone by; but it was one that fully justified the sarcastic acrimony of Cumberland, of a man who had lived through the brightest period of our theatrical history, and had seen and was still seeing those performers whom taste and nature had fashioned to a high degree of excellence.

It is amusing to observe the pertinacity with which Cumberland told his literary sorrows and

afflictions. In the prologue to the *Carmelite*, I find him again lamenting the hardships he endured in the following lines :

“ Yet bold the bard, to mount ambition’s wave,
And launch his wit upon a watery grave ;
Sharp critic rocks beneath him lie in wait,
And envious quicksands bar the muses’ straight ;
Wild o’er his head Detraction’s billows break ;
Doubt chills his heart, and terror pales his cheek ;
Hungry and faint what cordials can he bring
From the cold nymph of the Pierian spring ?
What stores collect from bare Parnassus’ head,
Where blooms no vineyard, where no beeves are fed !
And great Apollo’s laurels, which impart
Fame to his head, are famine to his heart.”

Did he believe that his lot would be softened by this querulousness ; or that his enemies would aim a weaker blow because he smarted from the wound ?

Of this tragedy it gives me pleasure to speak with more commendation than I could bestow upon the *Battle of Hastings*. The language is commonly chaste, the images often poetical, and the sentiments dignified and pathetic. He seems to have rectified his notions of tragic composition, and to have discovered that Melpomene does not always strut, but sometimes walks with graceful ease and sober dignity. There is an even tenor in the diction : it rarely rises into bombast, or sinks into meanness and imbecility. Perhaps the only exception to this opinion may be found in the fol-

lowing sentence, in which I find both rant and anti-climax :

“ Then, then the moon, by whose pale light you struck,
Turn'd fiery red, and from her angry orb
Darted contagious sickness on the earth ;
The planets in their courses shriek'd for horror ;
Heav'n dropt maternal tears—*Oh ! art thou come ?*”

The action of tragedy is one that sufficiently interests the spectator, but it is conducted with too little art. Had *St. Valori* concealed his secret till the last, (and his premature disclosure of it has no influence upon the events), the surprise had been greater, and the mind would have sympathised more intensely with the feelings of *Matilda*. It is the general defect of Cumberland in his plays, that he does not preserve the developement of the plot sufficiently, without anticipation ; he affords too many occasional glimpses in the progress of the action, of how it is to terminate ; and as his dramas have little else but intrigue to support or recommend them, for he rarely aims at the delineation of character, or the exhibition of prevailing follies, it may be pronounced eminently injudicious in him to rob them of that interest which the obscurity of an intricate fable artfully maintained infallibly creates.

The characters in this play, which require any notice, are those of *St. Valori*, *Matilda*, and *Montgomeri*. *St. Valori* is drawn with many pleasing qualities ; but *Matilda* is the person who chiefly

occupies our attention. Cumberland formed this character entirely for the display of Mrs. Siddons' powers, as he has avowed, in his dedication to that actress; and he gave her all that dignity, pathos, heroic honour, and commanding virtue, which she was so eminently qualified to exhibit. *Montgomeri* is invested with all that can excite esteem; he is brave, generous, noble, and pious. The mystery of his birth increases the interest of his character, and affords a happy opportunity for the display of maternal feelings in *Matilda*.

Hildebrand is pourtrayed merely as a guilty assassin, and neither the discovery which absolves him from the heaviest part of his crime, nor his repentant death awakens much emotion in the mind.

Mrs. Siddons spoke the epilogue to this tragedy. It was written by Cumberland, and the last six lines are made to express her own gratitude instead of the author's. They were these:

" But let no satyrist touch my lips with gall,
Lips from which none but grateful words shall fall.
Can I forget?—But I must here be dumb,
So vast *my* debt, I cannot count the sum;
Words would but fail me, and I claim no art,
I boast no eloquence—but of the heart.

About the time when the *Carmelite* (certainly the best of his tragedies) was performed, Cumberland again took up the arms of controversy, and encountered with them the Bishop of Llandaff,

“one of the ablest scholars,” says he, “and finest writers in the kingdom.” The bishop had published a proposal for equalising the revenues of the hierarchy and dignitaries of the church established. This proposal Cumberland opposed, and he thought “he had the best of the argument.” I doubt, however, if any man could have the best of an argument which gainsayed a proposition so equitable and beneficial. He adds also, with somewhat more arrogance than could become him, that he thought “his lordship did a wiser thing in declining the controversy, than in throwing out the proposal.” His lordship’s wisdom, in declining the controversy, many will admit, perhaps, as well as Cumberland, though probably not exactly with the same sort of conviction.

Another temporary thing of controversy, which Cumberland wrote, was a pamphlet, entitled, *Curtius rescued from the Gulph*. This was directed against Dr. Parr, who “had hit an unoffending gentleman too hard, by launching a huge fragment of Greek at his defenceless head.” The undertaking was suggested at one of Dilly’s literary dinners, and was soon executed; I have never heard, however, that the doctor deigned any reply, and I suppose Cumberland thought his wisdom no less conspicuous than the Bishop of Llandaff’s.

In commemorating the many pleasing hours which he passed at the table of Mr. Dilly, he ad-

verts to the names of those friends who seem to have been the dearest of his latter years. Among these he mentions Mr. Rogers, and praises his elegance of manners, as well as his excellence of heart. How justly this commendation is bestowed, let those who know Mr. Rogers best, decide; but when his departed friend tells him that he possesses "the brightest genius," and that he is the author of "one of the most beautiful and harmonious poems in our language," I would entreat him accurately to weigh the import of these words before he believes in their application. Perhaps, however, this caution is unnecessary; perhaps he knows, as well as I do, that weakness which his friend had, of praising those he loved, with an exuberance of adulation which not even the tenderness of regard could justify; and he receives, perhaps, this tribute to his "genius," as the benevolent effusion of a man who wrote from his heart rather than from his head.

I have read Mr. Rogers' poem on the "Pleasures of Memory," but found few things in it that gave me pleasure to remember. It is smoothly versified, and contains, occasionally, some pleasing reflections; but this is all; and I do not think that even the influence of his "elegance of manners," or "excellence of heart," were I within the sphere of their operation, could induce me to consider it as one of the "most beautiful and harmonious poems in our language," while I retained

those *pleasures of memory* which the recollection of Milton, Dryden, Pope, Thomson, Goldsmith, and Akenside's works are so apt to produce.

I should be happy, however, to see the fantastical citation of Cumberland duly answered by Mr. Rogers. Let him "stand forth in the title page of some future work that shall be in substance greater, in dignity of subject more sublime, and in purity of versification," superior to his poem already mentioned, and I would be among the first to confess his "genius," and extend the knowledge of it as far as my praise could have any influence.

Another gentleman, to whom Cumberland pays a tribute of affection, is Mr. Sharpe, of Mark-lane. To him it seems the public are indebted for the suggestion of writing those *Memoirs* of which so much is already known. The original intention, however, was to have withheld them till after the death of Cumberland: but the embarrassment of his circumstances rendered it necessary to depart from this resolution; and he sold the copy-right of them to his publishers for 500*l*. The truth of this statement Cumberland attests upon the authority of the following lines, which he addressed to Mr. Sharpe, and which contain so honourable and affectionate a testimony of his worth and virtue, that I should not hold myself blameless if I suppressed them here.

" To Richard Sharpe, Esq. of Mark Lane.

" If rime e'er spoke the language of the heart,
 Or truth employ'd the measur'd phrase of art,
 Believe me, Sharpe, this verse, which smoothly flows,
 Hath all the rough sincerity of prose.
 False flattering words from eager lips may fly,
 But who can pause to harmonise a lie ?
 Or e'er he made the jingling couplet chime,
 Conscience would start and reprobate the rhyme.
 If then 'twere merely to entrap your ear
 I call'd you friend, and pledg'd myself sincere,
 Genius would shudder at the base design,
 And my hand tremble as I shap'd the line.
 Poets oft times are tickled with a word,
 That gaily glitters at the festive board,
 And many a man, my judgment can't approve,
 Hath trick'd my foolish fancy of its love ;
 For every foible natural to my race
 Finds for a time with me some fleeting place ;
 But occupants so weak have no controul,
 No fix'd and legal tenure in my soul,
 Nor will my reason quit the faithful clue,
 That points to truth, to virtue, and to you.

In the vicissitudes of life we find
 Strange turns and twinings in the human mind,
 And he, who seeks consistency of plan,
 Is little vers'd in the great map of man ;
 The wider still the sphere in which we live,
 The more our calls to suffer and forgive :
 But from the hour (and many years are past)
 From the first hour I knew you to the last,
 Through every scene, self-center'd, and at rest,
 Your steady character hath stood the test,
 No rash conceits divert your solid thought,
 By patience foster'd and with candour fraught ;
 Mild in opinion, but of soul sincere,
 And only to the foes of truth severe,
 So unobtrusive is your wisdom's tone,
 Your converts hear, and fancy it their own,

With hand so fine you probe the festering mind,
 You heal our wounds, and leave no sore behind.
 Now say, my friend—but e'er you touch the task
 Weigh well the burden of the boon I ask—
 Say, when the pulses of this heart shall cease,
 And my soul quits her cares to seek her peace,
 Will your zeal prompt you to protect the name
 Of one not totally unknown to fame ?
 Will you, who only can the place supply
 Of a lost son, befriend my progeny ?
 For when the wreck goes down there will be found
 Some remnants of the freight to float around,
 Some that long time hath almost snatch'd from sight,
 And more unseen, that struggle for the light ;
 And sure I am the stage will not refuse,
 To lift her curtain for my widow'd Muse,
 Nor will her hearers less indulgent be,
 When that last curtain shall be dropt on me."

There are some good couplets in this extract, besides its general value as an authentic reference to a transaction intimately connected with the life of Cumberland.

To the melancholy request contained in these lines, Mr. Sharpe acceded, and to him were afterwards added, as co-adjutors in the office, Mr. Rogers and Sir James Bland Burges. The latter gentleman is very warmly commended by Mr. Cumberland, and his talents are eulogised with a degree of fervor amounting to enthusiasm. He was afterwards associated with his deceased friend, in the composition of the *Exodiad*, an epic poem.

"To these three friends," says Cumberland, "I devote this task, and upon their judgment I rely for the publication or suppression of what

they may find among my literary relics ; they are all much younger men than I am, and I pray God, that death, who cannot long spare me, will not draw those arrows from his quiver which fate has destined to extinguish them, till they have completed a career equal, at least in length to mine, crowned with more fame, and graced with much more fortune and prosperity. I know that they will do what they have said, and faithfully protect my posthumous reputation, as I have been a faithful friend to them and to their living works."

The reader will surely learn with wonder, that this bequest thus solemnly, thus publicly made, has been frustrated, by the intervention of Cumberland's youngest daughter, Mrs. Jansen, his Marianne, to whom he so tenderly dedicates his *Memoirs*. She has declined, I have been informed, the interference of those friends ; but from what motive I do not know ; a powerful one it ought to be, to justify her departure from a scheme which seems to have been so pleasing, in anticipation, to her father, and of whose propriety and importance he must have been the most competent judge. I hope, very sincerely, that no capricious feeling has guided her in this determination,

CHAP. XXI.

The NATURAL SON is produced.—Cumberland's excellence in prologues and epilogues asserted.—The character of Lady Paragon, the best female part he ever drew.—Examination of the other characters, and of the language and sentiments.—Anecdotes of Lord SACKVILLE.—His death, and his solemn declaration respecting the affair of Minden.

IN 1784 Cumberland produced his comedy of the *Natural Son*, the principal incident of which seems to be slightly derived from Fielding's *Tom Jones*. The prologue is a good one, and shall be transcribed. I do not think, indeed, that Cumberland's merit in this species of writing has been sufficiently acknowledged. After Dryden and Garrick, he may be allowed to surpass all others. The single excellence of Pope, and the not much more than single excellence of Johnson, must not be produced in comparison with the various degrees of excellence which Cumberland has exhibited in his prologues and epilogues.—They often contain some very happy couplets, and

occasional displays of wit and humour, not depending upon any allusion to the play to which they belong, but general and abstracted. The following will exemplify this :

The comic muse as Cyprian records prove
Was Comus' daughter by the Queen of Love,
A left hand lineage—whilst the tragic dame
From legal loins of father Vulcan came ;
Therefore *that* muse loves frolic, fun, and joke,
This bellows blowing, blustering, puff and smoke :
Hence mother nature's bye-begotten stock
Are all but chips of the old comic block ;
For all derive their pedigrees in tail,
From fathers frolicsome and mothers frail.
Therefore, if in this brat of ours you trace
Some feature of his merry mother's face,
Sure, sons of Comus, sure you'll let him in
To your gay brotherhood, as founder's kin.

A married Muse ! no ; Muses are too wise
To take a poet's jointure in the skies,
Th' anticipation of an unborn play,
Or star sown acres in the milky way :
So each lives single, like a cloister'd nun,
But does sometimes as other nuns have done—
Prays with grave authors—with the giddy prates,
Or ogles a young poet through the grates.

Therefore, our rule is, never to inquire
Who begat whom, what dam, or which the sire ;
But, soon as e'er the babe breathes vital air
Take him, and never ask how he got there.
Some are still born : some sent to mother earth,
Strangled by critic midwives in their birth ;
And many an unacknowledg'd foundling lies
Without a parent's hand to close its eyes :
Thus are our bills with deaths dramatic cramm'd,
And, what is worse,—to die, is to be damn'd.

You, the Humane Society, who sit,
To mitigate the casualties of wit,
Save a frail MUSE'S NATURAL SON from death !
He lives on fame, and fame lives on your breath.

The action of this comedy is not very intricate nor very interesting. Its deficiency in interest, however, may be attributed to the author's unskilful management of the materials which he possessed. With his accustomed negligence he tells that in the middle of his play which should have been reserved for the end. The disclosure of *Blushenly's* birth by *O'Flaherty*, and the discovery of his relationship to *Rueful* diminish that pleasure which the spectator would have felt in beholding *Lady Paragon's* love for him, founded on no other basis than his personal merits. To have accepted him as a poor and nameless foundling, would have exalted her passion upon the purest foundation: but before she can actually do this, she knows him as a wealthy heir, and as the offspring of a distinguished family.

Lady Paragon's character, however, is eminently agreeable. I have already said that I consider it as the best female part Cumberland ever drew, though he was inclined to claim that distinction for *Lady Davenant* in the *Mysterious Husband*. *Lady Paragon* must have shone with peculiar lustre in the performance of Miss Farren. She is volatile yet dignified, playful yet discreet, and tender and affectionate without a maudlin affecta-

tion of sensibility. She is just that interesting female in whose company no man could find himself without finding something else, perhaps, which would not conduce to his happiness. That unconstrained gaiety of manners, which invites a lover forward, and that tempered chastity of heart which makes him stop before he proceeds too far, that arch vivacity which teases without displeasing, that unsuspecting frankness which, disdaining artifice itself, believes it not in others, and that secure confidence in the power of beauty, loveliness, and virtue, which tempts their possessor to play with her prize almost to losing because she knows how to lure it back again; as the wanton girl gives mimic freedom to her favourite linnnet, but lets it not fly beyond the length of the silken cord that holds it, are all displayed with fascinating skill by Cumberland in the character of *Lady Paragon*; and I can well believe that when such an actress as Miss Farren undertook to adorn these attributes with living grace and action, the effect must have been irresistible.

Nor is the character of *Blushenly* without much that excites the spectator's pleasure. I could wish, however, that his name had not been indicative of his qualities. It is a paltry resource, and one to which Cumberland does not often condescend. It is a cheap species of wit to call a fearful man *Mr. Timid*, or a passionate one *Sir Furious Frenzy*, or a languishing love sick girl, *Miss Wanton*.

Such compellations destroy, in some degree, the effect of character, by awakening an anticipation of what it is to be.

Rueful and his servant *Dumps* excited some merriment perhaps in representation, but they have no power to do it in perusal. *Major O'Flaherty*, (in which name Cumberland seems to have delighted) is worse than his predecessor. *Mrs. Phæbe Latimer*, though not new to the stage, is amusing in many of her capricious notions.— If literature, in a woman, always produced such absurdities as are given to this lady, I should be among the first to wish that our wives and daughters were never allowed to open a book unless it were the Bible or Prayer Book, or perhaps honest John Bunyan, with two or three manuals of piety. Nay, I should hope some patriotic legislator would propose a law to make it a high misdemeanour and punishable accordingly, for any woman to be seen with a book in her hand, save and except, some such as those already mentioned: or perhaps it would be wiser to prohibit altogether the instruction of girls in reading: for if we entrust the key of a treasure, how can we be secure of its application? Luckily, however, the exaggerations of writers have no foundation but the chimerical one in their own fancies.

Cumberland's benevolence led him to make another effort in behalf of the suffering Irish Catholics,

when he put the following sentence into the mouth of *O'Flaherty*:

"I'll tell you what, Sir Jeffrey, you need not be surprised at finding a poor Catholic, like myself, an honest man; *you take a ready way to keep us so, by shutting us out of your service.*"

Cumberland was evidently one who would have granted complete civil as well as religious toleration to this portion of our fellow subjects. The question is involved in difficulties, and this is not the place to discuss them. Great names appear in behalf of emancipation; as great are arrayed against it: and the time, perhaps, is not now very far distant when the final decision can no longer be protracted.

The language of this comedy is supported throughout with easy elegance. The characters are placed in high life, and for such characters Cumberland could never be at a loss to find sentiments and expressions. The dialogue is spritely and animated beyond his usual tenor; and some of the scenes between *Lady Paragon* and *Blushenly* are written with a very high degree of comic excellence. The same may be said of those between *Mrs. Phæbe Latimer* and *Blushenly*.

I have noticed but few exceptions to this general praise; yet some there are. I wonder, indeed, that Cumberland should have given such phrases to *Lady Paragon* as these: "may I be further"—

“Sentiment in the country is *clear another thing* from sentiment in town”—“I can take it as *glibly* as a dish of tea.” This may have been the cant of fashionable life when Cumberland wrote, and may be so still: but *Lady Paragon* was not the representative of that class of fashionable females who would have used such jargon, and therefore in her it was improper.

In attempting to be witty he is sometimes extremely dull. When *Dumps*, who has quoted a familiar scrap of Latin, says afterwards that he was once employed to shew the monuments in Westminster Abbey, *O’Flaherty* replies, “Oho! you come out of the tombs, ’tis no wonder you speak the dead languages.” The whole scene, indeed, where *Dumps* is first introduced, is far removed from legitimate comedy; it is mere farce. The same may be said of the absurd incident of *Ruefull’s* being bled by *Jack Hustings*, and his consequent conduct.

Had Cumberland paused for a moment, I think he might have invented a dialogue more amusing than the following between *Lady Paragon* and *Blushenly*:

Lady P. Well, I protest you are insufferably vain.

Blush. And I swear you are insupportably handsome.

Could such unnatural trifling provoke any thing but contempt in the audience?

This comedy was acted the same season as the *Carmelite*, and Cumberland speaks of the hostility

with which he was pursued by the newspaper writers, as if his celerity in producing were the result of avarice and a mean desire to exclude all competitors. The ascription of such motives, however, could incur disgrace only on the inventor; though it seems to have had some effect up in the success of the play.

His old friend and patron, Lord Sackville, in whose vicinity Cumberland lived, was visibly declining, about this time, in health; and Cumberland, who had a grateful affection for him, has given an account of his manners and peculiarities, longer, perhaps, than was necessary, for he seems to confound what his own feelings were, in remembering a man with whom he had so intimately passed a part of his life, with what might be the curiosity of the reader. Some of the anecdotes which he tells, however, have a sort of abstracted interest, and are, besides, not wholly valueless, as they afford that insight into human nature which is, perhaps, the most valuable result of all inquiry. If the position, indeed, be true, that man is our proper study, (and I believe no reach of general argument can disprove it), then it follows that every thing which facilitates that study, or which increases our consequent knowledge, deserves to be held in a degree of estimation in proportion to its power of producing such effects. It must also be confessed that Cumberland's *cacœthes scribendi nugus*, never leads him

to the exposure of petty follies or familiar vices; if he be garrulous, it is at least to talk kindly of his friends, and to bring forth rather their eccentric virtues and their amiable foibles. To an intention thus benevolent, it would be harsh to oppose the severity of criticism; nor, in what he has told of the domestic life of Lord Sackville, is there any thing that calls for it. His narrative is lively and pleasing, and I have already borne testimony to the felicity of these biographical sketches, which Cumberland occasionally gives of his contemporaries.

It may, however, be observed here, that he was present with Lord Sackville when the last awful preparation for a future state was administered, and that he communicated with him. A short time previously to his death, also, he had an interesting conversation with him, touching the affair of Minden, from which, and from what he said in his dying moments, Cumberland deduces this opinion, "that if he did not from his heart, and upon the most entire conviction of his reason and understanding, solemnly acquit that injured man, (now gone to his account) of the opprobrious and false imputations deposed against him at his trial, he must be either brutally ignorant or wilfully obstinate against the truth."

This is a solemn declaration springing from a solemn evidence, and though the immediate interest of the transaction is gone by, I feel some pleasure in repeating it in this work. That which tends to exculpate innocence from foul and un-

merited aspersion, can never be too often told nor too widely diffused. It is a mutual debt which man owes to man : and I wish it could be added that it is a debt which we always willingly pay. Cumberland has recorded a conversation with Lord Sackville on this subject, in which he represents himself as suggesting to that nobleman, that " there must probably have been a chain of leading causes, which, though they could not make a part of his defence in a public court, might, if developed, throw such lights on the respective conduct of the parties, as would have led to conclusions different from those which stood upon the record." To these probabilities Lord Sackville very naturally assented; but it does not appear quite intelligible what those *leading causes* could have been, which a man standing on his defence against so important a charge, found himself precluded from stating. If they even involved the superior officers, under whose direction he acted, his own honour imperiously demanded that he should unfold whatever concerned them, if it led to his own exculpation ; and I own I find it difficult to believe that Lord Sackville would have consented to appear the culprit which he did in the estimation of his country, if he could have wiped off the foul and ignominious blot, by any disclosure of leading causes, with whomsoever those causes might have originated. The simple matter of accusation against him was, that he disobeyed the repeated

orders of Prince Ferdinand to advance with the cavalry, in order to sustain the infantry, and to attack the enemy, who were already broken and in confusion. Instead of complying with these orders, he rather chose to apply to the Prince, in person, for an explanation of them, because he did not think they were sufficiently explicit; by which means, as well as by repeated orders to halt after the march was actually begun, so much time was lost that the cavalry did not arrive soon enough to be of the least service, while it was proved, by evidence on the trial, that if he had promptly and effectively done his duty, the retreat of the French must have been converted into a ruinous and precipitate flight.

This was the offence for which he was put upon his trial, and how did he repel the accusation? He endeavoured to shew that, in the orders transmitted by the different *aids-du-camp*, there was so much variation and so much inconsistency, that it was not practicable to reconcile their instructions to any general object. Admitting, however, all the force of this defence, and giving to it every credibility which it can receive, still there is another question which immediately presents itself to the mind, and which was satisfactorily answered by the depositions of the witnesses on the trial. This question is, the evident necessity which appeared at the time, for the employment of that precise manœuvre which Prince Ferdinand ordered Lord

Sackville to perform. As an able general he ought to have seen this, and to have felt its propriety with a sort of intuitive consciousness, the moment the order of the Prince was communicated to him, no matter with what variations or with what inconsistencies. Different instructions might bid him reach a certain place by one path or by another; but if they all agreed that the place itself was to be reached, it then became his duty to act upon those concurrent orders as far as the main object was involved in them, and not to remain inactive in a most critical juncture upon the plea that he was not distinctly told which road he was to take. A great general, like a great poet, will sometimes snatch a wreath beyond the dull and formal course of rules and orders. Besides, the valour and promptitude of Lord Sackville might have been quickened by the spirited gallantry of Colonel Fitzroy, who, after telling the circumstances which occasioned the order, added, with the true enthusiasm of a soldier unchecked by any perplexities about precision of language, "that it was a glorious opportunity for the English to distinguish themselves, and that his lordship, by leading them on, would gain immortal honour."

His conduct, therefore, on that occasion, necessarily resolves itself into cowardice or incompetency. He either understood the order and saw its propriety, but feared to execute it, and, therefore, sought delay behind the pretext of doubt

and misconception; or, having really some scruples as to the precise nature of the Prince's instructions, and not possessing that military skill which qualified him to perceive, at once, what their meaning must have been, he felt all the timidity of ignorance in a situation so deeply responsible, and hastened to his commander for advice, when he should have acted with a prompt, efficient, and decisive vigour. For myself, acquitting him with Cumberland of all cowardice, I am inevitably led to the other conclusion, that his error was defect of judgment. The court-martial, indeed, found him guilty of neither; but merely of disobeying the orders of his commander, Prince Ferdinand of Brunswick, and for that offence, declared him incapable of serving his Majesty in any military capacity whatever; the confirmation of which sentence, and the expulsion of his name from the list of privy counsellors, were the last public acts of George II. who died soon after. In what has been here said, the intention is not to deny the fact as found by the court-martial, but to assign the most probable reason for its commission.

CHAP. XXII.

Rapidity of production not always consistent with excellence.—The comedy of the IMPOSTORS very inferior to the other plays of Cumberland.—The novel of ARUNDEL.—The degraded name of a novel.—The eminent merit of this one.—Arguments in favour of duelling.—Opposed by an extract from NUBILIA.—The characters drawn with great felicity.—Love exhibited by Cumberland superior to any other English writer of novels.—Sometimes trespasses on delicacy.—His excuse for this, and its futility.

No one, who has contemplated the list of Cumberland's productions, or whose business it has been, like mine, to examine them all with critical attention, will doubt the accuracy of his assertion, "that he never did nothing;" but every one, who is solicitous for his fame, will be tempted to wish that he had never done so much. Perpetual efforts to please are possible; perpetual success is not.—The teeming earth is impoverished by too copious production, and requires to lie fallow till it recovers its former vigour and fecundity; the mind too demands those intervals of rest, during which it may acquire fresh powers to throw forth, and fresh materials for combination. The writer, who is more desirous to shew his fertility than his

strength amuses his imagination with a fanciful rather than a real value ; as a man may be pronounced numerically richer who has a hundred pounds in sixpences, than he who has thrice the actual worth in one solid wedge of gold. It is not by diffusing our powers that we give them the strongest operation, though we do the widest ; concentrated energies produce the greatest and the most permanent effects.

Had Cumberland been duly aware of this truth, (and a most important one it is to every author who hopes to labour for immortality), he would have had less occasion to boast the ceaseless rapidity with which he wrote, and less, perhaps, to claim from the indulgence of criticism. It is a mortifying panegyric to admit the merits of an individual, with the qualifying clause, that he has done well, considering he has done so much.

I have been led into these observations from considering the *Impostors*, a comedy, which Cumberland produced in 1789, and the plot of which has some general resemblance to that of the *Beaux Stratagem*. But there all resemblance ceases. The dialogue is dull and insipid, the characters either vapid or preposterous, and the language destitute of all animation. Nature is violated in every scene ; and in none more than where *Eleanor* avows her love for *Sir Charles Freemantle*. Let the reader imagine the absurdity of a young lady being rescued in the morning from

the peril of an unruly horse, by a stranger to whom she very kindly gives her hand in marriage before night.

Quodcunque ostendis mihi sic, incredulus odi.

Eleanor seems to have been formed upon Wycherly's Country Girl, or rather Country Wife, for Garrick gave it the present name when he altered and adapted it for representation ; but instead of artlessness and simplicity, instead of the amusing sincerity of unsuspecting innocence, she has nothing but rustic coarseness at first, and flip-pant openness afterwards. She is, in every thing, inconsistent, and to waste more notice upon her would be inconsistency in me.

The general character of this play, indeed, is dullness in the incidents, imbecility in the dialogue, and extravagance in the characters. I have never heard its success ; and I should unwillingly believe that it had any.

About the same time that the *Impostors* appeared, Cumberland attempted a new species of writing, and produced his novel of *Arundel*. This degraded branch of composition few men of talent are willing to cultivate, because they fear to be confounded with that herd of scribblers whose effusions of folly or obscenity rank under the general denomination of novels. Yet, while such an abuse of fiction is to be lamented, the philosopher and the moralist see, by one intuitive glance of thought,

how noble and powerful an instrument is remaining inert and unoperative, because its name is vileness, and its uses, hitherto, have been too often foolish, or disgraceful. Some of our greatest men, however, have not disdained to employ imaginary narratives, as vehicles for conveying to the world their opinions upon life ; and the practice of such writers as Sir Thomas More, of Bacon, of Harrington, Swift, Johnson, and Voltaire, not to mention those who have written works of fiction for less exalted purposes, might dignify any thing beyond the power of subsequent depreciation. An epic is, in modern times, a thing no less degraded than a novel ; yet, were there now a man living, with genius capable of success, would he hesitate to tread in the steps of Homer, Virgil, Tasso, Camoens, and Milton, because inferior writers have prostituted the appellation ?

I rejoice that Cumberland was influenced by no such motives, or we had never seen *Arundel*, and I had lost *one* pleasure, which is more than man can afford to lose. I consider this novel as entitled to hold a very distinguished place, and as a production possessing a more than usual portion of fancy, elegance, and interest. It was written under some disadvantages while Cumberland was at Brighthelmstone, and sent to the press as fast as it was composed. He seems, however, to have had an accurate notion of its merits, and declares that notion without much reserve.

The character of *Arundel* is drawn with a degree of chivalrous refinement and loftiness of honour, which, without carrying him beyond nature, makes him such a being as we behold with delight, and long to imitate. His dignity of feeling never degenerates into arrogance, nor his graceful and becoming pride into haughtiness. His conduct is that of a perfect gentleman, undebased by any affectation.

His introduction into the family of Lord G. coincides, in some particulars, so strongly with Cumberland's own introduction into the family of Lord Halifax, that, as I have already observed, it always appeared to me intended to allude to that circumstance. I do not, indeed, mean to infer that Cumberland was an *Arundel*, for the resemblance soon ceases; but in all those regrets which *Arundel* pours forth, at being torn from his college solitude, from his favourite studies, and from his academical friends, to submit to political duties, and to the unvarying ones of a secretary's office, I think Cumberland intended an adumbration of his own early condition. This idea is strengthened in me, too, when I remember that he owed his promotion to his father's services during an election, and that *Arundel* is patronised by Lord G. for the very same reason. (See Letter II).

But, whatever affinity there may be between *Arundel* and Cumberland, there is none between the father of *Arundel* and his own venerable sire;

nor can I conjecture why he delighted to draw that character with such qualities as could excite only unmingled detestation. The reader hardly believes that such a son as *Arundel* could have sprung from so degenerate a stock, and the contrast, so far from heightening the virtues of the descendant, tends rather to diminish our admiration of them, from the operation of that prejudice so common in life, by which we extend, more or less, the ignominy of a single member to all the branches of a family. There seems to have been no sufficient motive for assigning to *Dr. Arundel* so much meanness; it has no influence upon the narrative, and might, therefore, have been spared with great advantage to the reader's feelings.

In the character of Lady G. Cumberland has certainly "set virtue upon ice," to use his own words; but so far from falling, I hardly think that she slips. Her husband treats her with scorn, and she indemnifies herself for his neglect, in the respectful and consoling attentions of another. These attentions lead to nothing that is criminal, and shall it be denied to a wounded heart to repose upon the bosom that would shelter, but which harbours no thought that would wrong it? In the letters of the *Honourable Mrs. Dormer* to *Lady G.* there are many arguments justificatory of her friend's conduct, and which, whether Cumberland meant them to be so, or not, are absolutely unanswerable.

But as much cannot be said, perhaps, of those which *Arundel* employs in defence of duelling, and which are derived rather from the practice itself, than from any abstract consideration of its necessity and propriety. In the person of *Arundel*, Cumberland employs that mode of reasoning which men, who adopt the system, must always use in their own vindication, nor will I deny that it is plausible, and apparently conclusive; but, the reply of *Mortlake* embraces the more rational view of the question; and though it may be true that the world will act with *Arundel*, while they think with his friend, nothing more is proved by the fact, than that error is more powerful than truth. The subject is one, however, that has been amply discussed, and little can be said upon it which has not been said already. It has had its opponents and defenders, nor does it appear that the practice has been much influenced by either. Attempts have been made, in some countries, to supercede the supposed necessity of duelling by the institution of a court of honour, to which individuals should be amenable for those offences that are now beyond the cognizance of law; but there was so little that could be definitely ascertained, so little of positive injury that could be established, in actions which operated on the imagination rather than on the reason, and so difficult it proved to apportion punishments for misdemeanors, where so much depended upon local and

temporary circumstances, that the schemes have generally failed. In France, such a plan was once matured, and reduced to practice, by the Marquis of Fenelon, uncle to the archbishop of Cambrai; but though supported by Louis XIV. by the prince of Condé, and by most of the great generals of the age, men whose motives nobody could suspect, the undertaking languished only for a short time, and gradually sunk into oblivion.

It is but justice, however, to say, that Cumberland has advanced more plausible arguments in defence of this practice, than any that I have elsewhere met with. They have a shew of solidity in them, and in some respects an actual authority, arising from the want of any other legitimate and acknowledged mode of redress for particular insults. Yet I would hope something as conclusive might be urged in support of a dignified forbearance; at least I thought so, when I wrote the following paragraph in *Nubilia*.

“It is to be regretted,” I have there observed, “that the invention of man has yet discovered no milder composition for offence than the destruction of life, or at least the risk of that destruction; and especially when we consider the insignificance of the causes that too frequently lead to the disgraceful practice of duelling. I do not know how a man, who is a father, a husband, a son, or a brother, acquits himself to his own conscience when he enters the field for such a purpose: nor, if his

antagonist fall, how he soothes that conscience into the belief that he has not committed murder. The plea of personal defence is futile; for in this country personal safety is not so wholly at the mercy of individual rancour. There are laws, and vigorous ones, if we choose to fly to them. As to the justification of honour, I tremble to think how that will avail them at the judgment seat of God. For, what is this honour? Its most bigotted followers cannot solve the question. They will tell you, that if they do not challenge, or accept a challenge, under certain circumstances, they will not be held *as men of honour*; that is, they will be disowned by a few profligate, vain, and immoral beings, for whose good opinion they are to risk their life. What an absurdity! Why, it is an emancipation—it is a freedom—it is a glorious liberty, to throw off the yoke of *their* opinion. No good, no wise, no virtuous man, will despise them; and, what is of infinitely greater importance, their God will not despise them.

“ If I am challenged I have but two things to consider: have I given offence? have I acted wrong? If I have, it becomes me, as a rational being, and it is my duty as a christian, to acknowledge my offence, and to repair the wrong I have committed. If he, whom I have offended or injured, be not satisfied with this, I have no more to do: I have done towards him all that would be required of me by my Creator; and shall I dare to

shed my blood, to appease man's proud and intemperate passions? On the other hand, if I am offended or injured, let me, if I can, practise the sublime virtue of forgiveness; if I cannot, let me demand that concession which I feel I would myself make; if this be denied, let me not seek for blood. These should be the arguments of a wise man; these should be the reflections of a christian. Is it the part of wisdom to ascertain guilt or innocence by an ordeal scarcely less absurd than the burning plough-shares? No matter how much I am in the wrong; if I have more skill than my adversary, or if a lucky chance should aid me, and I wound or kill him, I am immediately transformed into a man of honour! Nay, if we both retire without any personal injury, provided we have, each of us, fired off a loaded pistol, why then we are both men of honour! What a despicable sophistry it is!"

What my opinion was when I wrote this, it still is: I still think that a man might reject a challenge upon such motives, which, if distinctly, calmly, and fearlessly avowed, would secure him from every imputation on his honour, except, perhaps, among those whose opinions it is no honour to value.—I now return to *Arundel*.

The character of *Lady Louisa G.* is drawn in glowing colours. She has much of that sensibility, nobleness, and candour, of that ardent fire of youth, and that fervent enthusiasm of love, which

Rousseau has given to *Heloise*. She is sprightly and enthusiastic; above disguise and above vice. She trembles once, indeed, upon the brink of it, when she offers to elope with *Arundel*; but even then she preserves the esteem of the reader, from the ingenuousness with which she acts, and the motives that influence her.

Her friend and companion, *Lady Jane S.* has equal sensibility of heart, with somewhat more solidity of mind. Her playful vivacity and archness of raillery are very pleasingly exhibited, and the energy of virtue with which she dismisses her brother to the field of battle is highly interesting. I could wish, however, that Cumberland had made her less communicative upon her love for *Mortlake*. The description of their amorous moments, of their solitary rambles, when passion sometimes mastered prudence, and when the future husband dwelt with ardour upon joys to come, of all their little anticipations of expected bliss, and all the fond murmurings of requited affection, are topics which a woman should hardly expatiate upon even to a woman. With all *Lady Jane's* imputed frankness of character, I cannot but deem this display of it beyond the limits of female propriety.

In *Captain John Arundel*, Cumberland has very successfully depicted a frank, rough, and manly sea-officer, a character in which he totally failed in his comedy of *The Brothers*. He has done this too without any profusion of technical

language, like Smollett, to which, indeed, I should not suppose him adequate. He has preserved all the spirit of the resemblance, without copying its blemishes.

Mortlake is a very interesting personage. Less ardent, less enthusiastic than *Arundel*, he has more sobriety of judgment, and more piety of conduct. The moderation of his wishes makes him worthy of the prosperity he encounters, and the humility with which he receives it is a pleasing assurance that he will not abuse it.

I question if any writer ever disposed of his characters at the conclusion of a work, in a manner that more completely satisfies the reader, than Cumberland has done in this novel. The union of the two friends with their respective mistresses, who are also the friends of each other, their residence in the same neighbourhood, and their mutual affection, present such a picture of conjugal and domestic felicity, that the mind reposes upon the most pleasing association of ideas, while there is such an air of probability pervades the whole, that we are hardly conscious of the fiction.

The passion of love is exhibited in this work with nearer approaches to reality than has been done by any of our novel writers, if Richardson perhaps be excepted. In Fielding it is combined with too much pedantry, and in Smollett with too much licentiousness. The antiquated raptures of the heroes of former times, though probably not

wholly unlike the practice of the age in which the authors lived, have very little in them to attract a modern reader. Their adoring rants, or their un-awed boldness, disgust rather than amuse: while their affectation of ceremonious courtesy provokes only ridicule. They have no love: they have only gallantry: "*qui n'est point l'amour*," says Montesquieu*, "*mais le délicat, mais le léger, mais le perpétuel mensonge de l'amour*."

Cumberland has certainly avoided this frigid counterfeit in *Arundel*. He has given to the most endearing, the most powerful, and the most elevated passion of the human heart, all that dignity, fervour, and elegance, which truly belong to it, but which as few are capable of feeling as of describing. Nor does he deviate into the other extreme of romantic extravagance. He has happily caught the graceful medium, and displayed a picture the most agreeable and fascinating of any novelist in the language.

I deliver this opinion at some peril, for my acquaintance with English novels, except with those which are admitted into every library for their excellence, is very limited. They are books into which I seldom look, unless recommended by some one in whose judgment I can securely confide: nor had I read even Cumberland's novels till my present undertaking rendered it necessary. Perhaps, therefore,

* *Esprit des Loix*. Tom. III. liv. xxviii. ch. 22.

there may be others qualified to dispute this peculiar praise which I have bestowed upon *Arundel*.

I wish, however, that Cumberland had always regulated his imagination with the same sobriety that he exercised in his *Observer*. There are some parts of this work which, though not obscene, are certainly indelicate, if not indecent. I shall not specify them, for it would only serve as an index to what might better be expunged; but Cumberland knew the transgression, and endeavoured to mitigate it in an advertisement prefixed to the third edition of the book. His justification, however, is but the last resource of a man who will not plead guilty, and must therefore say something.

“Let them reflect,” he observes, “upon the habits of an author, who has been long in the practice of writing for the stage, which is a province of the art that naturally requires a strong cast of characters, and a striking relief of light and shade. Accustomed to compress his energies within a stated compass, the dramatic writer must not let his fable slumber, or his language creep: that tantalizing and minute precision in developing the passions, which the French novelists are so expert in, he will neither have the leisure, nor perhaps the talents, to pursue; and in his hand the pencil, whether it traces the adventures of a novel, or the incidents of a play, will colour highly, without attention to those fine and delicate grada-

tions, that a more laborious finisher would be studious to excel in."

What vindication there is in this paragraph, I will leave the reader to discover. Some such sophistry might be urged in defence of any delinquency. A thief-taker might commit a robbery, and afterwards plead in extenuation, that he had been so long accustomed, in his profession, to all the details of stealing, that some excuse must be made for him. But Cumberland's appeal is refuted by his own practice. In his plays he rarely trespasses upon decency : why then in his novels ?—Because the act could not be censured with that immediate disapprobation which is exercised in a theatre when the audience is displeased.

CHAP. XXIII.

Emboldened by the success of ARUNDEL, Cumberland writes his novel of HENRY.—His advertisement to it.—Borrows the initial chapters from FIELDING.—The characters examined.—SUSAN MAY, a mere wanton.—Severe censure of Cumberland for his indelicacy.—Possessed no powers of humour.—Exemplified.—A minute examination of the characters, sentiments, and incidents of this novel.—Cumberland very successful in delineating the passion of love.—Brief account of JOHN DE LANCASTER.—Inferior both to ARUNDEL and HENRY.

EMBOLDENED by the success of *Arundel*, Cumberland sat down to the composition of *Henry*, a work more extensive in its scope, and apparently laboured with more assiduity. The incidents are more numerous, the characters more contrasted and developed, and the whole work is evidently the result of a belief that the author was qualified to contest, with the highest names in our language, for the palm of supremacy in the construction of a novel. The existence of this belief is, to me, sufficiently manifested in the short *Advertisement to the Reader*. Cumberland did not usually assume a lofty tone, though he was never without a

due consciousness of his own merits : but in the following paragraph he talks with the confidence of a man who exacts, rather than solicits, approbation.

“ It is a custom,” says he, “ with some authors, to introduce their works by a prefatory appeal to the candour of the reader, and circumstances may undoubtedly combine to justify the measure ; but when a man acts from his own free motives in resorting to the press, how can he be warranted for intruding on the public without a proper confidence in his powers for entertaining them ? True respect to the reader refers itself to his judgment, and makes no attempts upon his pity. The purchaser of these volumes would have just reason to complain of his bargain, if he were to find nothing in them but a sample of my modesty in the preface, and a long dull story at the end of it ; and I should only prove that I thought more meanly of his taste than of my own talents, were I to presume that he could be well pleased with a production of which my own opinion was so very humble, as to stand in need of an apology for presenting it to him. I therefore hold it as fair dealing to premise, that if these volumes do not merit his approbation, they have small claim upon his candour, forasmuch as they have been carefully and deliberately written, some years having passed since the first hand was put to them ; during which no diligence has been spared to make them worthy, both in style

and matter, of that generous public, who are so justly entitled to every grateful exertion on my part, and to whose future favours it is my best ambition to aspire."

There is an amusing mixture of diffidence and presumption in this address. The author thinks he has no right to insult the public by doubting the merit of his offering: and yet he makes an appeal to their generosity. Justice, however, was all he should have loftily demanded, secure in his right to it. It is only the feeble and the erring who need ask from generosity what they cannot hope from equity.

The novel of Henry bears internal evidence of having been "carefully and deliberately written," though it is doubtful whether its excellence be in proportion to that care and deliberation. Assiduous application may sometimes bestow upon a production a cold freedom from error, without giving it that vigorous animation which works of imagination frequently derive from a lucky rapidity of execution. That which is glowingly struck off "at a heat," (to use the phrase employed by Dryden in characterizing the celerity with which he composed his matchless ode,) possesses commonly a fervour of execution which more than redeems those minute inaccuracies that patient labour might have escaped.

Cumberland has borrowed, in this work, the initial chapters from Fielding; and he has por-

rowed them only to disfigure his production. In Fielding himself, they have always appeared to me as blemishes : they interrupt the course of the narration, and give an air of pedantry to the whole.— But Cumberland, who wanted humour to make them tolerable, seems to have adopted the practice only because it was Fielding's, and because they supplied him with opportunities of talking about himself and his opinions. Sometimes, indeed, he has made them injudiciously subservient to the anticipation of the story, by telling the reader what the subsequent book is to contain.

What may be called the action or fable of this novel, is contrived with considerable ingenuity ; and it was to this skilful concatenation of the incidents, I suppose, that Cumberland devoted that care and deliberation he so emphatically announces in his advertisement. In *Arundel* there is very little plot, but a great deal of sentiment. Here there is much bustle and intrigue, and little sentiment.

It must be acknowledged, however, that the interest of the narrative is so equably maintained, that it never slumbers in the imagination. An agreeable degree of suspense is excited from the first to the last, and such a diversity of incidents is embraced in the work, that as soon as one event is dismissed, another is brought forward to provoke attention.

The hero is introduced to the reader's notice in

a manner very unlike the ordinary plan of ordinary writers, and truly illustrative of the precept of Horace :

Non fumum ex fulgore, sed ex fumo dare lucem.

He appears upon the lowest step of human life, and gradually ascends to the highest, by a course of events, all of which are transacted under our inspection.

One striking defect, however, in the management of the story, is the disclosure of *Henry's* birth to the reader, while it still remains a mystery to himself; and the consequence of which is, that we have no longer any sympathy with those hopes and fears that agitate his bosom as often as his origin becomes the object of his thoughts.

Henry, however, is a very interesting character. He has, of course, all those attributes bestowed upon him which are to be found rather in the writer's fancy than in the scenes of actual life, as concentrated in one person; but as they are judiciously brought into action, no extraordinary occasions being invented merely for the display of extraordinary virtues, their exhibition in him awakens only a pleasing enthusiasm in the mind, a generous desire, and wish, that we knew such a man among our own friends or acquaintance.

Susan May is a mere wanton, decorated with more alluring colours than any author should have employed who wishes not to confound the distinc-

tions between vice and virtue. I have said, at p. 443 of this volume, that Cumberland, in some of his writings, "needed only to employ a corresponding licentiousness of expression to rank with the corrupters of public morals;" and it was chiefly in allusion to some of the scenes between *Henry* and *Susan* that I delivered so severe an opinion. Every reader of *Henry*, however, will testify its truth; and I am sorry that it is so. The licentiousness of Fielding and Smollett has been justly inveighed against; but Cumberland exceeds them both. He seems to have delighted in a studied and insidious embellishment of ideas and situations, which, by being robbed of some of their grossness, become so much the more dangerous: and he has laboured to invest the person, who is most immoral in these scenes, with a general loveliness of character, a softness, benevolence, and sensibility of heart, which wins upon our affections, and soothes our reason into acquiescence. *Susan May* is, indeed, the most interesting female in the work; not perhaps the most guilty, for *Fanny Claypole* is made to share that pre-eminence with her; but she unites to her libidinous appetites other qualities of so disgusting a character, that we feel only unmingled detestation, while *Susan* is hardly hated even when the full extent of her criminality is developed before us. This perversion of the power of fiction is, perhaps, one of the most dangerous that can be employed; for while it can be

believed that wanton profligacy may exist in conjunction with every virtue but its own opposite, many will be found to practise the vice, who have no other claims to the endearing moral qualities, but what are to be found in the illusions of their own bosoms.

It will not be necessary to examine this novel with much minuteness. Its copiousness of character and incident, indeed, would render such an undertaking tediously prolix. I shall dismiss it, therefore, with a few general observations upon particular parts.

Cumberland had no powers of humour, and as often as he attempt it, so often he inevitably fails. In *Henry* he has frequently sought to imitate the quaintness of Fielding, but the endeavour always leads to disappointment. Where can be found more pedantry and affectation, for example, than in the following paragraph from the first chapter?

“ There is a voice, a look, a tone, in truth and innocence, which holds a sympathy with the hearts of those, on whom their evidences light, irresistibly impressive. What honest Zachary wore in his bosom, under his left ribs, was fairly made by nature of real flesh and blood, and not of flint or adamant, or any such impenetrable substance as she sometimes puts in the place of better workmanship and softer materials, whereby the owners become, as it were, casemated and bomb proof

against all besiegers, of which number pity and compassion, though in appearance the most gentle, are in fact among the most importunate and persevering; insomuch that the said Zachary had no sooner heard these words, and reconnoitered the signs and symbols of truth and innocence, which accompanied them, than he felt something like a string or chord vibrating and tingling in the aforesaid region under his ribs, which running along the ducts and channels that communicated with his tongue, put that little member into motion, and produced the following words:”—

Surely this is beneath contempt; but if the author thought it humour, who, that could have patience to write so, might not produce volumes of humour? The reader will remember also, that *Henry* is coupled with the *Observer*, by Cumberland, as one of those works in which his harmony and perspicuity of style was so conspicuous: let him therefore examine the preceding paragraph, and when he has enumerated the *insomuches* and the *whereby's*, with which its several clauses are connected; when he has observed that the whole is but one period, and that the idea is confusedly protracted from member to member, then let him decide in which part of it harmony or clearness is most distinctly visible.

Let me, indeed, finally declare, that no man ever formed a notion more erroneous than Cumberland did, when he believed that he had written a style

of such excellence in his *Observer* and in this work. Were it necessary to my purpose I could produce innumerable instances to disprove this belief: instances more numerous than any reader would have patience to peruse. My own opinion is, that his diction is remarkable for obscurity, and I have often hopelessly relinquished all attempts to detect his meaning beneath the cumbrous weight of words and the perplexing involution of sentences with which he has oppressed it. I would be understood to say this, however, only of his *Observer* and of *Henry*. In his plays, and in *Arundel*, his diction is very often elegant, harmonious, and perspicuous.

I will exhibit one more instance of Cumberland's abortive efforts to be humorous. The following is the description of *Zachary's* immersion in a mill pond, in consequence of his horse being frightened by the clamour of a duck.

“ The duck, who had a friend at home, took her flight towards the mill, vociferating most incontinently by the way, till she had called out the miller's dog, who sallied forth in her defence with all possible alacrity, bristling every hair with ardour for revenge, and rushing to the ford, where the flouncing and dashing of the waters directed him to the scene of action. Without a moment's hesitation, this amphibious animal plunged into the stream, at the very moment when *Zachary's* fate hung upon the balance, and the nymph of the brook was preparing to receive him in her arms.

His head, according the principles of action and re-action of elastic bodies, had taken a tour through the segment of a parabola, and was now in its declination towards the crupper of old Betty, when the avenger of the duck seized the skirt of his coat, and spite of all impediments, which staytape and buckram could oppose to his gripe, took so fast a hold, and gave the luckless accoucheur so hearty a tug in the crisis of vacillation, that he came backwards into the pool, and terrible was the fall thereof."

I commit this to the reader's judgment. If he can possibly require conviction of its futility, no arguments of mine can reach him.

Cumberland seldom succeeds when he has to frame a diction for characters in low life; he had seen little of it, and knew nothing of its peculiarities of manner and language. Hence the deficiency in such scenes in *Henry*, and hence the excellence of *Arundel*, the incidents of which being uniformly placed in elevated society, the ideas and phraseology are elegantly appropriate.

A disregard of probability in producing events, is the common reproach of novel writers, and Cumberland is not free from it. Fielding was usually very scrupulous in avoiding this fault, especially in *Tom Jones*, though even he sometimes committed it; but Cumberland never hesitates, whenever there is occasion, to produce a most miraculous concurrence of circumstances, very useful to himself, but

very offensive to his readers. Such is the meeting between *Henry* and *Delapoer* at sea, and the introduction of *Bowsey* at the same time.

From Fielding, who was his model, he has borrowed many defects. Among others we find in him that universal ascription of all excellence to his characters when the existence of that excellence is requisite for the occasion. The *finest*, the *bravest*, the *noblest*, the *most generous*, the *most elegant*, the *most graceful*, &c. are epithets lavished with so little discrimination that they become at last ridiculous. They are attributes which the author never seems to bestow till some occurrence happens in which they must be asserted or the plot deranged.

In supporting the consistency of his characters Cumberland often fails. *Jemima* and *Susan* both speak a language, occasionally, which might be uttered in the senate without impropriety: but neither *Susan* nor *Jemima* are presumed to have had that education, or to have moved in that sphere of life which could qualify them for such elegance of diction. The one is a rural wanton, and the other a bestial drunkard.

There is one excellence which I think belongs peculiarly to Cumberland, and that is in supporting a scene of courtly and refined altercation. I know no writer who can be compared to him in this respect. If he had to exhibit a quarrel between two porters he would infallibly display only

an impotent endeavour to succeed: but when he represents two gentlemen contentiously engaged he gives them at once, dignity, acrimony, and a chivalrous tone of sentiment supported by an exquisite felicity of style. His plays have many scenes that support this opinion: and the tenth chapter of the fourth book of *Henry*, is an admirable instance of this power which he possessed.

Cumberland excels, also, both Fielding and Smollett, and sometimes even Richardson, in his descriptions of female grace and beauty. Fielding and Smollett describe their women like voluptuaries; Cumberland like a lover. In them we find only the common enumeration of charms which may inflame desire, in Cumberland such as may awaken sentiment and respectful feeling, for he usually combines them with some moral excellence of which they are made only the visible effects or the pleasing associates. He utters no hyperbolical raptures at the imaginary contemplation of his females, nor exalts them to divinities by giving them charms which mere mortals never possessed: he soberly and dispassionately celebrates such corporeal qualities as may be found in any accidental assemblage of the sex, and which, having all the weight of truth, they please as beauties but do not strike as wonders.

In the character of *Ezekiel Daw*, Cumberland made a fresh exertion of his benevolence, and strove to excite the reader's good will for an itine-

rant methodist preacher; an individual whom it has long been the custom to regard with a mixture of ridicule and contempt. By giving him active and essential piety, by making him humane, zealous in doing good, and respectable in conduct, he has certainly succeeded in displaying one methodist whom it is possible to esteem. His quotations from scripture are copious and appropriate: but I am afraid they are sometimes irreverent.

Lady Crowbery is a very pleasingly drawn. Her husband is a wretch whose end no one pities. *Isabella*, as the heroine of the tale, has received all the author's most elaborate touches and is, in many parts, pourtrayed with great felicity. But her filial piety exalts her moral character I fear beyond what it is capable of attaining when attained in opposition to vehement and resistless love. She has many fascinating qualities, though I should not think her so dangerous to the peace of an admirer as *Lady Louisa G.* or her friend *Lady Jane* in *Arundel*.

Of *Zachary Cawdle* I probably think less favourably than the author, for he says, in his *Memoirs*, that he drew him *con amore*. He is only one of a species: he will never constitute a distinct genus. He sometimes amuses, but when he does, it is rather by exaggeration than by any display of nature. His wife, *Jemima*, might have been omitted, and the narrative had proceeded just as regularly. If she was introduced only to shew

that faith without good works, is merely a holy cheat, a sanctimonious covering to hide innate depravity and to cloke the basest actions, the labour was superfluous. Every one knew that who knew how to join two propositions.

Fanny Claypole is drawn with some skill. The unbridled fury of her passions leads her, on all occasions, to violent excesses, and whether she loves or hates she is equally the object of our terror and aversion. Her father is another instance of Cumberland's willingness to degrade the established clergy by every meanness that can sully without destroying the man. Like *Joseph Arundel*, he is a despicable sycophant, who fawns, crawls, and licks the dust to obtain some paltry, mercenary end. But is it necessary, is it prudent or patriotic, to exhibit such vices in the character of a clergyman? I do not say they are not to be found in the members of the church: but when it is considered how potent opinion is and how much of our reverence for the most sacred institutions is founded upon that frail and fickle basis, it may be justly questioned whether much political evil may not eventually result from the too great freedom of satire in holding up the established ministers of religion to insult and derision. Without being fastidious, also, I may be permitted to hint that such willingness to this kind of freedom is somewhat remarkable in the son and great-grandson of

a bishop, and in a man who often employed his pen to combat the enemies of the church, or to promote the duties of its members.

The episode of *Blackford* is well conducted, and is made subservient to a moral purpose. *Henry*, also, is displayed to great advantage in his conduct on the occasion. He does not do more, indeed, than many, it is to be hoped, would have done; but what he does is so much beyond the reach of common integrity that the display of it seems to give a new impulse to virtue.

Cumberland appears to have been aware of his superiority in depicting the passion of love. In the initial chapter to the first book he says, "one thing however, there is for me to do, that cannot be dispensed with though I shall probably hold it off as long as I can. I must make love, and I am far from sure, I shall make it in a style to please my readers. I wish to my heart I knew what sort of love they best like; for there are so many patterns, I am puzzled how to choose what may please them. I have been sometimes told that the author of *Arundel* was not far from the butt: if so, I hope I am as good a marksman as he is."

This, indeed, is playful raillery, but truth is at the bottom: and Cumberland might confidently have assumed to himself that excellence which he seems only to surmise. Yet, he could sometimes degenerate into rant, as when a gentleman exclaims, who is listening to *Isabella*, "What voice

do I hear? What vision do I behold? She breathes through rows of pearls over beds of roses. 'Tis an enchantment! She will vanish presently, and I shall start out of my trance."

Surely the author was in a trance when he wrote such unnatural bombast. He rarely, however, offends in this way.

Cumberland's opinion, as to his excellence of style, was settled long before he wrote his *Memoirs*. In the first chapter of the twelfth book of *Henry*, he hints that the critic will not find much to reprehend in his diction, but begs, that if a blow be struck, it may be struck with justice. It would be idle repetition to dispute this opinion with the same minuteness as I have done in the *Observer*; the reader must candidly believe my power to do it, or remove his doubts by looking into the volumes himself. I will only instance one error. The ninth chapter of the last book has this interrogatory at the head of it.

"Why is earth and ashes proud?"

In dismissing this novel from my notice, I would finally observe, that it is one which must always be read with pleasure; that the contexture of the fable is artfully woven; that the characters are, most of them, skilfully drawn; that the situations are often pathetic and interesting; that the attention of the reader is never suffered to lapse into indifference, and that the sentiments which it con-

tains are commonly friendly to virtue and social happiness. Its impurities I have already stigmatised: and Cumberland himself does not disdain to acknowledge his transgressions in his *Memoirs*, where he says, "if, in my zeal to exhibit virtue triumphant over the most tempting allurements, I have painted those allurements in too vivid colours, I am sorry, and ask pardon of all those who thought the moral did not heal the mischief."

Let me anticipate the progress of my narrative here, and close this chapter with some brief observations upon the last novel that Cumberland wrote, his *John De Lancaster*, in three volumes, and published in 1809. This work he announced with some degree of pomp in his *Memoirs*, but when it appeared the public received it with coolness. It was not only inferior to both his preceding productions, but inferior also, to many similar compositions of inferior writers.

*It deserves, indeed, to be distinguished from the common herd of novels, for it has more *learning* than an ordinary novelist can display; and Cumberland seems to have relied upon that learning, and upon his name, for its success.

The plot is very simple, and not very interesting. Events are too easily anticipated. There is no art, no dexterity, in the developement of the

* Some of the opinions here delivered upon *John de Lancaster*, are copied from an account which I had occasion to give of it, in a periodical publication, when it first appeared. I have added a few others upon a recent perusal.

catastrophe, or in the texture of the incidents. Not is this radical deficiency of fable compensated by any elegance of diction, by any elevation of sentiment, or by any accuracy in the delineation of the characters. None of them are consistently drawn, though several are well sketched. *Philip de Lancaster* is, perhaps, the best. *Robert de Lancaster* is learned, vapid, and digressive, in the first volume; in the second and third he loses some of these qualities, and becomes more natural and more interesting.

I am sorry to find Cumberland, at a much later period of his life, again violating decorum in some of his descriptions. He does not, indeed, offend so much, as in *Henry*, but he offends more than can be justified. There is something peculiarly disgusting in the indelicacy of an old man. The exhausted pruriency of imagination, which it betrays, is highly offensive. I will not specify the instances that are in my memory, but will dismiss the subject with observing, that the entire account of the hero's birth is narrated with a studied coarseness of delineation.

This work exhibits evident tokens of mental decay. In *Arundel*, and in *Henry*, the love scenes were described with an ardent and impressive glow of composition; but here they are coldly and affectedly wrought up. Cumberland knew it. "I am ill at these descriptions," says he; "I confess it. Seventy years and seven, with clouds that

hang upon my setting sun, will chill the brain, that should devise scenes and descriptions warm with youthful love." This is true; and Cumberland, doubtless, believed the following no less so. "Still, the chaste maiden," he continues, "and the prudent wife, shall turn these leaves over with no revolting hand, nor blush for having read them." To this I answer, that she who can read these volumes through, and not blush, or feel cause for blushing, has lost all true modesty. Let me not be thought fastidiously nice. It is only when a man tells me he is immaculate that I am provoked to point out the spot which I would else have shut my eyes upon; and I willingly confess that, compared to some passages in *Henry*, *John de Lancaster* is purity itself. Yet, there are certain allusions in it which no really modest female would venture to read aloud in the presence of a man, and that is the true test.

In the phlegmatic character of *Philip de Lancaster*, Cumberland seems only to have expanded the sketch which he gave, in the *Observer*, of *Ned Drowsy*.

There is an affecting appeal in the third volume to the feelings of the reader. He speaks of the death of his grandson, a midshipman, and who, he thought, had been the victim of ill-usage. The question was referred to some of our tribunals as I remember, but their decision did not corroborate the opinion of Cumberland. From this subject he

makes a transition to his "beloved daughter," to whom he dedicated his *Memoirs*, and to whom he also dedicates this work; "for these repeated testimonies of my love," he pathetically adds, "are all the inheritance I can bequeath her, all my hard fortune hath not wrested from me."

His diction was not much improved when he wrote *John de Lancaster*. It is often vulgar, sometimes ungrammatical, and sometimes obscure. His attempts at wit or humour are as unsuccessful as in his happiest days of mental vigour. I will adduce one instance:

"We may literally say, that it (a morning visit) was made upon the *spur* of the occasion, and this we hope will be an apology for our introducing the baronet in *boots*."

It is amusing to see with what unwearied assiduity Cumberland sought to propitiate the critics. In the outset of his career he dared them with a proud defiance; but he soon discovered who suffered most in the contest, and then he strove to soothe them by blandishments and courtesy. In *John de Lancaster* he openly solicits them to befriend his book and to promote its sale. "As I know some of them," he says, "to be fair and honourable gentlemen, I hope they will recollect how often I have been useful to them, in the sale of their publications, and assist me now with their good word in the circulation of *De Lancaster*."

I am afraid this request was not very cordially

attended to, or that Cumberland believed them to possess a power they do not. His book languished to a second edition, and there, I imagine, it will remain. It is, in many parts, too erudite for the unlearned without being deep enough for the learned, and its familiar scenes which might please the common reader, want spriteliness and animation. The lethargic influence of age seems to have impeded his faculties while he wrote; and if he wrote from necessity, who but must deplore the embarrassments that obscured the closing hours of a life so assiduously employed in the labours of literature?

*Necessitas, cujus cursus transversus impetum
Voluerunt multi effugere, pauci potuerunt,
Quo me detrusit pœne extremis sensibus?*

CHAP. XXIV.

Cumberland writes the poem of CALVARY.—Dr. DRAKE injudiciously endeavours to rank it with the PARADISE LOST.—Examination of this claim, and a further examination of Dr. DRAKE's competency as a critic.—The merits of the poem briefly stated.—Cumberland's account of its composition.—Writes a tract upon Christianity, which commences with too much levity; but the other parts good.—The conclusion of it extracted for its animation.

CUMBERLAND had now appeared in various departments of literature, and in most of them with success. He had distinguished himself as a dramatist, as an essayist, and as a novelist, and he had displayed powers of very respectable quality in other paths of exertion. But his ambition led him to take a bolder flight, and he attempted the arduous composition of an epic poem. Arduous it certainly was, in him, for it forced him into immediate and unavoidable comparison with Milton; a comparison from which few can expect to retire but with discomfiture.

The *Calvary* of Cumberland is a poem which no judicious critic will venture to place on an equality, either as a whole, or in any of its parts,

with the *Paradise Lost* of Milton. This is a pre-eminence it can never merit, nor ever will obtain. A mighty chasm separated the genius of the one from the other; nor do I hesitate to pronounce, that the highest flights of Cumberland's muse barely excel the lowest of Milton's. I will not institute a comparison between them, for it would be tacitly acknowledging a parallelism, of whose existence I can never be persuaded. I would as willingly compare him with Shakspeare as a dramatist, as with Milton as an epic poet.

In this opinion, however, I differ from a gentleman who has highly praised Cumberland's *Calvary*, and whom Cumberland has highly praised in return. These are literary courtesies very customary, but without any weight in deciding an abstract point of criticism.

Dr. Drake, in his *Literary Hours*, a work qualified to afford some amusement in a vacant moment, has entered upon an elaborate and diffuse examination of this poem, and with as much solemnity and circumstantial inquiry, as Addison bestowed upon the *Paradise Lost*. He considers it under all the usual properties of an epic poem, and very gravely pronounces that it is complete in its fable, in its characters, and in its sentiments. Aristotle himself could not have decided the question with a greater assumption of infallibility.

Dr. Drake, after some introductory observations upon Milton, Klopstock, and Young, whom he

calls "three divine bards," though it appears he understands nothing of the German poet's divinity, but what the imperfect glimpses of a translation afford, proceeds to inform his readers that the "Calvary of Mr. Cumberland is a work imbued with the genuine spirit of Milton, and destined, therefore, most probably, to immortality." To this induction, indeed, no one will object, who admits the premiss, but as I do not admit the premiss I must be permitted to doubt whether posterity will know much of Calvary, except as it may be remembered among the collected productions of the author.

Encomiastic criticism, however pleasing to a candid mind, is not always the positive evidence of a strong one. To praise is easy, because it is generally received without examination; and because it is less difficult to find pleasure in mediocrity, than to shew in what mediocrity consists. Whoever has been attentive to the history of modern literature, will have observed numerous instances of boundless panegyric, bestowed, by contemporary writers, upon works which are now consigned to merited oblivion. Cumberland is not the first who has been told by a good-natured friend, or by an incompetent critic, that he wrote with all the fire of Milton and Shakspeare; nor is he the last who will find that the voice of kindness, and the voice of justice, pronounce two different judgments.

It is certainly possible, nay, I am willing to think it probable, that Dr. Drake believed, and does still believe, that the poem of *Calvary* has in it many qualities which entitle it to be compared with *Paradise Lost*. There is nothing extraordinary in this, because we are familiar with paradoxes just as extraordinary. The decisions of taste are reducible to no demonstration, and Dr. Drake may at least justify his by the example of Johnson, who thought Dryden's Ode to Mrs. Anne Killigrew, the noblest that our language has ever produced. If, therefore, a critic of Johnson's sagacity, could be seduced into an opinion like this, why may not Dr. Drake say that Cumberland writes like Milton?

To say it, however, is not to prove it, and I wish Dr. Drake could have done more than say it. He does, indeed, attempt to do more, for he quotes, with profusion, those passages from *Calvary* which he deems not inferior to any in *Paradise Lost*. Nor is this all. He opposes Cumberland to Milton in parallel cases, where they both exhibit the same character, and he avows that, on some occasions, Cumberland excels Milton. I need not tell the reader, that my opinion is contrary to this; and if he requires to have his own settled on the same basis, he has nothing to do but to inspect the selections of Dr. Drake. I doubt, indeed, if any one ever concurred with him in this decision, except Cumberland himself.

Dr. Drake is fond of figurative language and unmeaning epithets. Not contented with elevating Cumberland to an equality with Milton, he takes another flight, and raises him to a level with Shakspeare. "The speeches of the demons, in the first book," says he, "and those of Mammon and Iscariot in the second and third, are *woven in the loom* of Shakspeare, and have imbibed much of his colouring and spirit." This is surely too much. I am as willing, however, that Cumberland should be the cor rival of Shakspeare as of Milton; but I am afraid Dr. Drake has unintentionally proved the only way in which he can be said to have woven in the loom of Shakspeare, by selecting the passages which he has adopted, almost literally, from that writer.

Dr. Drake has devoted nearly a hundred pages to the task of proving Cumberland's affinity to Milton and Shakspeare, and of displaying his own powers as a critic. How successfully he has attained the first object I have already declared my opinion; and I fear he has succeeded no better in the second. I do not wish to speak disrespectfully of Dr. Drake, for I have heard that his private character is amiable; but I must freely own, that I think him wholly incompetent to the office of general and abstract criticism. His papers upon Cumberland's *Calvary* are written with that quiet mediocrity of talent, with that easy accuracy of familiar truths, and with that tone of insipid talk

which might be endured by a young man yet new to critical disquisition, or by any man with a head capable only of reading without thinking. There are, in his *Literary Hours*, however, some pleasing tales, sometimes pleasingly told, but they are more frequently disfigured by a finical affectation of style; by a diction oppressed and obscured by metaphorical confusion, unmeaning epithets, and superlative phrases of rapture.

His papers on Cumberland, however, are not without their utility. The selections which he has made from *Calvary*, though they do not prove what they are intended to prove, comprise, perhaps, the very best passages in the poem, and he who has not read it, but wishes to know by what excellences Cumberland is entitled to be regarded as the rival of Milton, may better satisfy that curiosity by perusing these concentrated efforts of his genius, than by perusing the whole poem.

Calvary is certainly a very pleasing production. The versification is harmonious, the images are often poetical, and the action is one of unfailling interest. A general air of easy elegance pervades the whole, an unconstrained fluency of language which is very agreeable to the ear, but which makes very little impression on the mind. Some parts too are laboured into dignity and animation, but the reader is always unmoved. He lays down the book without a desire to resume it, and when he

does resume it, his interest in the narrative is never so strong that he is unwilling to quit it.

This defect may be partly attributed, perhaps, to the nature of the subject. No curiosity is excited because we know what is to be told ; we are familiar with all the principal events, and anticipate the catastrophe. This inherent defect of plan could be compensated only by the highest efforts of poetry, by the introduction of all those striking descriptions, those sublime flights, and those exquisite moral touches of sentiment, with which Milton has relieved the radical imperfection of his fable, but which were wholly beyond the attainment of Cumberland. His action proceeds with an even tenor of narration ; and the utmost effect, which I believe the poem capable of producing, is that of a pleasing apathy of mind, a gentle acquiescence, undisturbed either by any tumultuous throes of delight, or by any harsh provocations of disgust.

Such is my opinion of *Calvary*, delivered from unfeigned conviction, and without any anxiety as to its reception. They who differ from me may probably think it a vain or a foolish one, as I perhaps should theirs, if I knew it as explicitly ; Dr. Drake must think it so, for he thinks the poem imbued with the genuine spirit of Milton ; but as I have always been unwilling to form my notions upon those of others, without the conviction of my reason, I shall be contented to bear any interpretation

which can be put upon this judgment, till I feel a sufficient motive to alter it.

In the *Supplement*, which Cumberland published to his *Memoirs*, he very naturally takes an opportunity of thanking Dr. Drake, whom he justly calls his "kind reviewer," for the praises he bestowed upon *Calvary*; but I believe he conceded, in the warmth of his judgment, a power to that critic's commendation, which no one but the object of it will be willing to allow, when he says that he obtained for his poem, "a place amongst our British Classics." Let the event decide.

Cumberland seems to have regarded this work with so much affection, and has detailed its origin and progress with so much minuteness, that the reader would hardly consider me excuseable if I omitted to insert the account here :

"The mental gratification which the exercise of fancy, in the act of composition, gives me, has, (with the exception only of the task I am at present engaged in), led me to that inordinate consumption of paper, of which much has been profitless, much unseen, and very much of that which has been seen, would have been more worthy of the world, had I bestowed more blotting upon it before I committed it to the press; yet I am now about to mention a poem not the most imperfect of my various productions, of which the first manuscript copy was the only one, and that, perhaps, the fairest I had ever put out of my hands.—

Heroic verse has been always more familiar to me, and more easy in point of composition, than prose; my thoughts flow more freely in metre, and I can oftentimes fill a page with less labour and less time in verse of that description, than it costs me to adjust and harmonise a single period in prose, to my entire satisfaction.

“The work I now allude to is my poem of *Calvary*, and the gratification, of which I have been speaking, mixed, as I trust, with worthier and more serious motives, led me to that undertaking. It had never been my hard lot to write, as many of my superiors have been forced to do, task-work for a bookseller, it was therefore my custom, as it is with voluptuaries of another description, to fly from one pursuit to another for the greater zest which change and contrast gave to my intellectual pleasures. I had, as yet, done nothing in the epic way, except my juvenile attempt, of which I have given an extract, and I applied myself to the composition of *Calvary*, with uncommon ardour; I began it in the winter, and, rising every morning some hours before day-light, soon dispatched the whole poem of eight books, at the average of full fifty lines in a day, of which I kept a regular account, marking each day's work upon my manuscript. I mention this because it is a fact; but I am not so mistaken as to suppose that any author can be entitled to take credit to himself for the little care he has bestowed upon his compositions.

“It was not till I had taken up Milton’s immortal poem of *Paradise Lost*, and read it studiously and completely through, that I brought the plan of *Calvary* to a consistency, and resolved to venture on the attempt. I saw such aids, in point of character, incident, and diction, such facilities, held out by the sacred historians, as encouraged me to hope I might aspire to introduce my humble Muse upon that hallowed ground without profaning it.

“As for the difficulties, which, by the nature of his subject Milton had to encounter, I perceived them to be such as nothing but the genius of Milton could surmount; that he has failed in some instances cannot be denied, but it is matter of wonder and admiration, that he has miscarried in so few. The noble structure he has contrived to raise with the co-operation of two human beings only, and those the first created of the human race, strikes us with astonishment; but at the same time it forces him upon such frequent flights beyond the bounds of nature, and obliges him in so great a degree to depend upon the agency of supernatural beings, of whose persons we have no prototype, and of whose operations, offices, and intellectual powers, we are incompetent to form any adequate conception, that it is not to be wondered at, if there are parts and passages in that divine poem, that we either pass over by choice, or cannot read without regret.

“Upon a single text in scripture he has described a *Battle in Heaven*, in most respects tremendously sublime, in others painfully reminding us how impossible it is for man’s limited imagination to find weapons for immortal spirits, or conceive an army of rebellious angels employing instruments of human invention upon the vain impossible idea, that their material artillery could shake the immaterial throne of the One Supreme Being, the Almighty Creator and Disposer of them and the universe. Accordingly, when we are presented with the description of Christ, the meek Redeemer of mankind, going forth in a chariot to the battle, brilliant although the picture is, it dazzles, and we start from it revolted by the blaze. But when the poet, deeming himself competent to find words for the Almighty, contrives a conference between the First and Second Persons in the Trinity, we are compelled to say with Pope—

That God the Father turns a school-divine.

“I must entreat my readers not so to misconceive my meaning as to suppose me vain enough to think, that by noticing these spots in Milton’s glorious sun, I am advancing my dim lamp to any the most distant competition with it. I have no other motive for mentioning them, but to convince the patrons of these memoirs, that I did not attempt the composition of a sacred epic, where he must for ever stand so decidedly pre-eminent, till

by comparing the facilities of my subject with the amazing difficulties of his, I had found a bow proportioned to my strength, and did not presume to bend it till I was certified of its flexibility.

“ It could not possibly be overlooked by me, that in taking the Death of Christ for my subject, I had the advantage of dating my poem at a point of time, the most awful in the whole history of the world, the most pregnant with sublime events, and the most fully fraught with grand and interesting characters ; that I had those characters, and those events, so pointedly delineated and so impressively described by the inspired historians, as to leave little else for me to do, but to restrain invention, and religiously to follow in the path that was chalked out to me. Accordingly, I trust there will be found very little of the audacity of fancy in the composition of *Calvary*, and few sentiments or expressions ascribed to the Saviour, which have not the sanction and authority of the sacred records. When he descends into *Hades*, I have endeavoured to avail myself of what has been revealed to us for those conjectural descriptions, and I hope I have not far outstepped discretion, or heedlessly indulged a wild imagination ; for though I venture upon untouched ground, presuming to unfold a scene, which mystery has involved in darkness, yet I have the visions of the Saint at Patmos to hold up a light to me, and assist me in my efforts to pervade futurity.

“My first publication of *Calvary*, in quarto, had so languid a sale, that it left me with the inconvenient loss of at least one hundred pounds, and the discouraging conviction, that the public did not concern itself about the poem, or the poem maker. I felt at the same time a proud indignant consciousness, that it claimed a better treatment: and whilst I called to mind the true and brotherly devotion I had ever borne to the fame of my contemporaries, I was stung by their neglect; and having laid my poem on the *Death of my Redeemer* at the feet of my Sovereign, which, for aught that ever reached my knowledge, he might or might not have received by the hand of his librarian, I had nothing to console me but the reflection, that there would, perhaps, be a tribunal that would deal out justice to me, when I could not be a gainer by it, and speak favourably of my performance, when I could not hear their praises.”

The conclusion of this extract shows what was Cumberland's secret opinion of his poem; and he probably thought (at least Dr. Drake would have whispered it to him,) that, like the *Paradise Lost*, it was destined to languish for awhile in obscurity, only to burst forth, afterwards, with greater lustre, and to acquire a more splendid destiny.

When Burke published his pamphlet on the French revolution, Cumberland was one among the many who considered it with admiration. He

was not content with silently approving, however ; he wrote a letter to Burke, communicating his high sense of its merit, to which an answer was politely returned. In this answer Burke expresses his satisfaction at being applauded by a man so distinguished in literature as Cumberland, and “ in so great a variety of its branches.”

To this last expression Cumberland afterwards alludes with a just consciousness of its truth, and proceeds to exemplify it, dwelling with a pleasing remembrance on that division of his labours which he had appropriated to the services of religion.— He mentions the composition of as many sermons as would make a large volume, some of which have been delivered from the pulpit. He rendered also fifty of the psalms of David into English metre ; and he wrote a religious and argumentative Tract, which I have already alluded to, entitled, “ A few plain Reasons why we should believe in Christ, and adhere to his Religion ; addressed to the Patrons and Professors of the New Philosophy.”

There is in this pamphlet much solidity of argument, and a becoming warmth of persuasion.— Novelty, either in the opinions expressed, or in the mode of enforcing or illustrating them, could hardly be hoped ; and the good to be expected was that which might result from concentrating the popular opinions on the subjects discussed, and urging them upon the attention by a forcible brevity of application. This object Cumberland seems

very steadily to have kept in view ; but I could wish that the introductory paragraphs had been written with less levity. In a serious, argumentative address, which professes to defend the great cause of christianity, and to convert infidelity by the weight and importance of its reasonings, it is unbecoming the subject to indulge in a playful irony of language, which may amuse men indeed, but will never convince them. The Tract commences with this sort of buffoonery :

“ GENTLEMEN PATRONS AND PROFESSORS OF
THE NEW PHILOSOPHY !

“ Though I doubt not but your illuminated understandings are stored with many exquisitely ingenious reasons, why this our country should no longer retain the character of a christian country, yet I hope you will in candour be pleased to let a plain man offer you a few plain reasons why he conceives it should. Old fashioned folks have thought that men are not found to be worse subjects to their king, worse friends to their country, or worse members of society, for having some sense of religion ; and the same old fashioned folks have habituated themselves to believe, that, amongst all the religions in the world, a better could not be taken up than that which we already possess.”

This is bad enough ; but the following is worse, because it is intended for argument, while it is, in fact, nothing but banter and burlesque :

“ I declare to you, gentlemen, without going out of my way to compliment you, I consider your word to be altogether as good as your oath, for your honour is at least as good as your religion ; and, as human judges and juries are all you stand in awe of, so long as you can keep out of the calendar, you can have nothing to apprehend from your consciences, having put those active thieft-catchers to complete silence, and made their office a perfect sinecure. You can have no solicitude about your country, your friends, or your posterity, &c.”

I do not think that the cause of truth was likely to be much advanced by such arguments as these.

With the exception of these passages, however, the address is written with great propriety, and with a due sense of its importance. The concluding paragraphs I will extract, for they have much energy, and have perhaps the most eloquence of any thing Cumberland ever wrote.

“ Being now near the end of my days, I implore God to endow my beloved countrymen with a right understanding of his mercy ; and I conjure them, as they value their happiness, their dignity, their freedom, their comforts in this life, and their hopes of eternal blessedness in the life to come, to beware of those ensnaring principles which the enemies of their peace are assiduously employed to propagate. Stand for your God, my friends, and he will stand for you ; put faith into your souls to protect your

altars, and God will put courage into your hearts to defend your coasts. Be steady to your faith, be true to your country, be loyal to your king ; he is stedfast in his duty, let us be firm in ours ; he has never broke faith with us, we will not break faith with him.

“ We will rally round his throne, our laws, our liberties, and constitution, if the enemy shall invade us ; we will rally round our altars, our religion, and our God, if they send their incendiaries amongst us ; and we will hold in sovereign contempt those frenchified fops in philosophy, who would undermine our principles, and when they have degraded our understandings to the despicable level of their own, would deliver us over to be slaves and abjects to the domineering tyranny of a republic, who, having washed their hands in the blood of their earthly sovereign, have filled up the measure of their iniquity by renouncing their God. All those wretches, unworthy of the name of Britons, who, like footpads in the cloaks of philosophers, lurk about the outskirts of society, that from their hiding holes they may come forth, and give the stab to the religion of their rejected Saviour, are the sneaking emissaries, the insidious cowardly abettors of our inveterate and envious enemy.— Again I conjure you ; I implore you to beware of them ; they will civilly, circuitously, cunningly attempt to circumvent you ; they will write novels, histories, dramas, to corrupt you ; they will

dress up vicious characters in the borrowed clothes of virtue, paint adulteresses in amiable but false colours, to engage your pity, and exhibit seduction, intemperance, impurity, profaneness, even atheism itself, in lights so fallaciously attractive, as may surprise your passions, and in the unguarded moments of weakness insinuate their own diabolical principles into your incautious hearts. Once more I beseech you to beware of them, and sum up my most earnest wishes for your prosperity in the following prayer:

“ O GOD, all gracious and all good, on whose protecting providence we rest our hope, now in this evil time save us we most humbly beseech thee, and amidst the terrors of thy judgments, when tribulation is come upon the earth, send down thy Holy Spirit upon us, that turning from the wickedness of our ways, and seeking Thee, in whom alone there is salvation, we may obtain remission of our sins, and be received, as hitherto we have been, into thy most merciful favour and protection: Spare us, O Lord, spare us; And if it be thy will to send upon the earth thy three sore evils, the sword, the pestilence, and the famine, pour not the full vial of thy wrath upon us; correct us, Lord, but not in thine anger, lest thou bring us to nothing. We acknowledge and bewail our offences; we lament the influence of those principles, which, setting all authority divine and human at defiance, are spreading infidelity over the whole christian

world ; and with horror we confess, that even in this our soil those poisonous seeds have taken root. Purify our hearts, O God, we beseech thee ; send the health of thy saving grace amongst us, and enable us to escape that plague, more terrible than all which can afflict the body, that great offence which can destroy the soul. Direct the councils, O Lord, we pray thee, and prosper the endeavours of our gracious Sovereign, and those who are in authority under him, for the welfare of these kingdoms ; and keep alive in the hearts of thy faithful people that sense of thy true religion, that zeal for thy worship, and respect for the church established, as may for ever frustrate the devices, and disappoint the malice of all such, who either openly revile thy name, or secretly conspire to ensnare the understandings and pervert the minds of weak and unstable men. And, O Lord God omnipotent, in whose hands are the issues of war and peace, we do not presume to search into thy unfathomable councils, nor dare to ask how long thou wilt permit the impious and ungodly men, who are a sword of thine, to triumph and lay waste the nations ; but fight thou for us, O God, who are armed in thy defence, and duly conscious from whom alone cometh all victory, are ever prepared to give, not unto ourselves, but unto Thee the glory : Save us, therefore, we beseech thee, from the hands of our enemies ; and whilst we praise and magnify thy holy name, for thy past mercies vouchsafed to us,

withdraw not from us thy help, O God, but send us forth with hearts confirmed in thy faith, and strengthen us for the battle; so shall the high thoughts of the proud be brought low, and the enemy, who now boasteth himself in his strength, be taught to confess, that in thy name alone there is salvation, and that whoso dwelleth under the defence of the Most High, shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty."

When Cumberland published this tract, he sent a copy of it to the Bishop of London, and to the Archbishop of Canterbury. The Bishop of London politely acknowledged the present: the Archbishop of Canterbury did not. Perhaps his Grace looked first at the introductory paragraph, was displeased with its flippancy, and read no farther: the only excuse which can be surmised for such an omission of common courtesy.

CHAP. XXV.

Enumeration of Cumberland's various plays, produced between 1790 and 1808.—Of these only three deserve to be remembered, the JEW, the WHEEL OF FORTUNE, and FIRST LOVE.—Examination of each of these dramas.—SHEVA not skilfully drawn.—Mrs. INCHBALD's sagacity.—PENRUDDOCK an interesting character.—A lesson for married people recommended by Mrs. INCHBALD.—Cumberland's great defect as a dramatic writer stated.—The forwardness of his females.

IN enumerating the multifarious literary productions of Cumberland it will not be necessary distinctly to examine each. Many of them have quietly passed into oblivion, and it would be frivolous to drag them from their quiet slumbers in forgetfulness, to subject them to an ordeal which they are not calculated to encounter, and from which no benefit could be derived. This is particularly true of his numerous dramas, few of which now keep possession of the stage, though it must be confessed that many which are now *laid by*, might be performed with greater advantage to public taste and morals than those can which are occasionally brought forward.

These I have noticed with a degree of minuteness in proportion to what I conceived to be their merits, and according to the degree in which I imagined them to be illustrative of Cumberland's talents. In the great mass of his plays, however, written between the years 1790 and 1808, I know but three that can deserve examination: the *Wheel of Fortune*, the *Jew*, and *First Love*. Of these, the first is frequently performed, the second sometimes, and the last never.

Before I pass to the consideration of these dramas, I will enumerate the names of all that he produced between the periods already mentioned.

At the Haymarket theatre was acted the comic opera of *Wat Tyler*, afterwards altered in consequence of some objections by the Lord Chamberlain, and produced under the name of the *Armourer*. After this the comedies of the *Country Attorney*, and the *Box Lobby Challenge*, and the drama of *Don Pedro*. For the *Box Lobby Challenge* a humorous epilogue was written by George Colman.

At Drury-Lane were performed the *Jew*, the *Wheel of Fortune*, *First Love*, the *Last of the Family*, the *Word for Nature*, the *Dependant*, the *Eccentric Lover*, and the *Sailor's Daughter*. Also, (in 1808) after the publication of his *Memoirs*, a comic opera called the *Jew of Mogadore*, which seemed to be intended as another attempt to awaken kindness and good will towards the in-

dividuals of that race. The piece failed, however, and deservedly, for it had neither mirth, wit, nor humour to recommend it. The songs, indeed, were somewhat above the ordinary level of such compositions, but the dullness of the whole hurried it into oblivion.

At Covent-Garden were acted, *The Days of Yore*, *False Impressions*, *A Hint to Husbands*, and *Joanna of Montfaucon*. This last piece I do not find any where mentioned by Cumberland ; probably he did not regard it as his own, being only adapted by him for the stage from one of Kotzebue's dramas. It was acted in 1800, and was published with a prologue and a long preface by Cumberland. In the prologue he alludes to the difficulty of working upon the ideas of another man in the following lines :

The scenes that soon will open to your view,
In their first sketch a foreign author drew ;
If merely tracing his inventive thought,
We set translation's servile task at nought,
All who can judge our labour must confess,
Originality had made it less.

The difficulty, indeed, must have been greatly increased to Cumberland, because he was unacquainted with the German language, and had to trust therefore to the imperfect conceptions of another. It was a task, however, unworthy of his talents, and the success of the undertaking was equal to its merits.

The comedy of the *Jew* was the first new piece exhibited on the stage of the late Drury-Lane theatre, after it had splendidly risen from that ruin to which it has been recently devoted a second time, and from which it is now a second time likely to emerge. Its chief object is distinctly avowed by Cumberland to have been the benevolent one of rescuing a persecuted race of beings from that hereditary contempt and degradation which had for ages belonged to them ; and though I do not believe that the notions of my countrymen have been much softened by this comedy, or by the character of *Abraham Abrahams* in the *Observer*, yet every praise must be conceded to the author's intention. He has, at least, made three Jews amiable and interesting, which might be deemed an extraordinary effort, did we not remember that Gay has done as much for a highway-man.

Sheva, however, does not exclusively obtain our regard: he is sometimes ridiculous, and sometimes contemptible. When he relieves the distresses of others with a noble disdain of publicity, nay, with a patient endurance of insults as the consequence, we admire his virtues ; but, in making him penurious with all the absurd excesses of a miser, he too often excites our laughter without improving our good will. He is still exhibited with some of the presumed attributes of his race, but charity is given to him to counterbalance their obloquy. Would not Cumberland have done

better, however, as his intention really was to exalt that people, had he pourtrayed him such as, I believe, he might have found him in society; liberal, hospitable, kind, and generous, with no other difference in his conduct than what a difference of religious faith must produce? To make him a miser was to make him despicable: and to make him a miser only that he might have enough to assist others was to make him unnatural. No man thinks much of his fellow creatures, who has learned to forget himself, and it is in a communion of interests, pleasures, and feelings that one part, and perhaps the greater part, of virtue's delights consists. He who has persuaded himself that he may starve his servants and his own body, to hoard up money for benevolent uses, will soon discover that what he wants himself others may want, and he will keep his gold untouched. By such conduct, too, he fails in the first duty of every man, that towards himself and to those under him, and how can he suppose it more worthy to befriend the stranger or the profligate than these?

In making *Sheva*, therefore, a penurious miser, that by such self-denial, he might do more good, Cumberland violated nature; and in endeavouring to astonish by a combination of characters hitherto known to be immiscible, he weakened the effect of that union, (the jew and the philanthropist) which every man must wish to be not only probable but common.

Mrs. Inchbald, in her prefatory strictures upon this comedy, ventures, however, to commend Cumberland for having attained a double purpose in *Sheva*, that of exhibiting a *virtuous Jew* and a *virtuous miser*. A virtuous Jew he has certainly displayed: but a virtuous miser is what no man can display. I wish Mrs. Inchbald had duly weighed the import of this word before she used it. A miser cannot be virtuous: if he be virtuous he is not a miser. A miser is a wretch whose whole soul is centered in the accumulation of wealth, and who would sooner yield the blood from his veins than the gold from his coffers. He has but one idea, one wish, one enjoyment, and that is to hoard: to give is beyond his comprehension. Can such a being be virtuous? No. But if he is virtuous, if he bestows as freely as he gathers, if he knows "the luxury of doing good," then he cannot be the wretch I have described: he cannot be a miser either to himself or to others. Cumberland, however, forgetful of this truth, has absurdly endeavoured to depict a contradiction, and Mrs. Inchbald, drawing her notions from the character instead of from life, has applauded it with a contradiction of terms no less absurd.

Her praise of avarice and her condemnation of poverty in poets, as the result of their own extravagance, may be passed over without any reply: but the following positions are new in the philosophy of man, and deserve to be transcribed.

“ Indiscriminate profusion has been the dramatic hero’s virtue in every comedy till Cumberland shewed to the long blinded world, that—*the less a man gives to himself, the more, it is probable, he bestows upon his neighbour*, This conclusion is derived from the *certainty* that—*the less a man loves himself, the more he is affectionate to others.*”

The beautiful novelty as well as obscurity of these sentiments, leaves me no hope that I can demonstrate to the reader their peculiar acuteness : and I shall dismiss them therefore with simply observing, that all social love springs from self-love, and that when a man has lost all self-regard, all self-reverence, he will soon degenerate into misanthropy. It is only while we believe that mankind can be useful or pleasing to ourselves that we are disposed, as by a mutual obligation, to be useful or pleasing to them : but, if we cease to care for ourselves, our dependence upon others is diminished in proportion, and finding that we can do without their aid, we feel no disposition to awaken or uphold their benevolence towards us by bestowing our aid upon them.

The other characters of this comedy seem to have been drawn merely as subsidiary to that of *Sheva*. They serve to fill up the scenes and to carry on the action ; but they leave no trace upon the mind. *Jubal* is sometimes humorous, indeed, but it is the humour of farce rather than of comedy. The plot is pleasing, and though not intricate,

sufficiently perplexed to keep the attention awake.

The *Wheel of Fortune* was the next drama that Cumberland produced, and its present popularity is the best proof of its excellence. There can be no doubt, indeed, that Mr. Kemble's performance of *Penruddock* has contributed largely to this popularity, and Cumberland justly observes, that "when so much belongs to the actor, the author must be careful how he arrogates too much to himself:" but still great merit must be allowed to the writer.

It has been very commonly believed that Cumberland derived the general outline of his plot from Kotzebue's *Misanthropy and Repentance*, a manuscript translation of which was lying in the manager's hands at the time when the *Wheel of Fortune* was produced. The striking similarity between the chief incidents of the two plays, justified, indeed, this suspicion, and the author of the translation from Kotzebue openly accused Cumberland of having unfairly pirated from his work. This charge Cumberland as openly denied, and professed, I believe, that he took the hint of his own play from a review of the German one which he accidentally saw.

Whether, however, he invented or whether he borrowed the plot, it is sufficiently certain that it is one of peculiar interest, and one which no repetition of performance can hardly rob of its power to please. The chief character, (*Penruddock*) is

drawn with some master-strokes of art. That nobleness of nature which misfortune might obscure but could not subdue, and that sensibility of heart which defied the power of time to eradicate its sorrows, are two features in the composition of this part which Cumberland has pourtrayed with happy skill. Nor ought less praise to be bestowed upon him for the judgment and intimate knowledge of effect which he has displayed in selecting the most interesting situations for the operation of these two feelings, without which their existence would have impressed the mind but faintly. I do not know, indeed, any scene of any modern drama, which is conducted with more dexterity than the interview between *Penruddock* and young *Woodville*, when the former details to the son all the baseness of his father. It is wrought up with consummate skill.

The misanthropy of *Penruddock* consists rather in his feelings, than in his practice, towards mankind. He shuns his fellow-creatures, but he does not hate them. He seeks solitude as the balm of a wounded heart, not as the retirement of a spleenetic one. He hides his sorrows from those whom he does not think can participate them, but to the sorrows of others he is not insensible. A momentary gleam of anticipated revenge draws him from his seclusion, but the native benevolence and kindness of his heart soon subdue all the rough asperities of his disposition, and he who came forth

into society only to punish and destroy, remains to do good and to enjoy the satisfaction of it. Such is the character of *Penruddock*, and it must be confessed that it required no ordinary powers to discriminate its qualities as Cumberland has done; for this praise is his alone, Kotzebue's recluse being wholly distinct from *Penruddock* in its component parts.

Mrs. Inchbald, whom to praise is more pleasing than to censure, has written some very sensible observations upon this drama, and paid a due tribute to the excellence of the actor whose performance of *Penruddock* I have already mentioned. "Old men in love," she truly observes, "have caused more laughter and derision on the stage, than, perhaps, any other common occurrence which the dramatist has copied. Here, astonishing reverse! love, in the decline of life, constitutes a character deeply pathetic."

All the interest of the play is concentrated in this character, and Cumberland seems to have been so well aware of it, that the other personages of the drama are permitted to appear and disappear without much concern either in the spectator or reader. Some attempt to relieve this uniform mediocrity has been made, indeed, in the characters of *Governor Tempest* and *Sir David Daw*; but though they amuse on the stage they lose all power of doing it in the closet. *Penruddock* is the fixed star of this comedy, and the rest of the characters

are only satellites that move round him with diminished splendor. They are all drawn, indeed, with chastity of colouring, but they want boldness of expression and design to give them permanent effect.

The language, throughout, is elegant, and in *Penruddock* sometimes elevated; but the sentiments which he is made to utter are not always without inflation and obscurity. The following reply to *Weazle*, who reminds him that money can purchase female attractions, has always appeared to me ineffably absurd:

“I keep a woman,” says he: “she visits me every day, makes my bed, sweeps my house, cooks my dinner, and is seventy years of age,—*yet I resist her.*”

It is remarkable that Cumberland did not entertain the same notion of the merit of this drama as the public. To a gentleman who seized an opportunity of thanking him for the delight he had experienced in reading it, he replied, with some chagrin, “Sir, that is not the best thing I ever wrote.”

Such was *his* opinion; yet, if I were called upon to pronounce which of his dramas I considered as the best, upon a general estimation of general excellence, I think I should not hesitate to say the *Wheel of Fortune*. There are, in other of his plays, particular scenes, perhaps, equal to any that may be found in this; but none of his dramas maintain

such a commanding interest in the mind during the whole progress of the action, nor is there, in any of them, any character so felicitously supported throughout as *Penruddock*.

The comedy of *First Love* is greatly inferior either to the *Jew* or the *Wheel of Fortune*. The plot is confused rather than artfully intricate; though it is sometimes interesting. The dialogue is dull; it has neither wit, nor any quick reciprocation of lively sentiments. The situations are seldom comic; it approaches decidedly to sentimental comedy in all the worst features of that species of composition, and which, if it were not redeemed by better instances, I should be tempted to condemn with as much severity as Voltaire. "Je souscris entierement," says he, in a letter to the dramatist, Sumorokof, "à tout ce que vous dites de Moliere et de la comedie larmoyante, qui, a la honte de la nation, a succédé au seul vrai genre comique porté à perfection par l'inimitable Moliere."

Of the characters of this play *Sabina's* is the most interesting, and *Billy Bustle's* the most contemptible. *David Mowbray* is well supported in some parts. The broken and disfigured language of *Sabina* is badly constructed. It is not the imperfect diction of a foreigner, labouring to express herself in a strange tongue, but the blundering efforts of one who seems to know no language.

The characters of Mr. and Mrs. Wrangle are

absurdly imagined and absurdly supported. They quarrel without motive, and are kind again without reconciliation. Marriage is embayed with multitudinous evils, but I do not think that it contains such frivolous rancour as this. Domestic wranglings are common enough in those whom necessity compels to live together, but whom nature has disjoined in every quality of mind and body: yet, there is commonly a cause for bickering, and they do not contend as he-cats do only because they happen to meet.

I am sorry that Mrs. Inchbald, whose general observations on this play I willingly approve, should have singled out these very characters as the only objects of her applause.

“Some excellent instruction to the married,” says she, “will be found in the connubial conduct of Mr. and Mrs. Wrangle, particularly at the conclusion of the fourth act.”

Unfortunate in her praise of the conjugal instructions, she is more than unfortunate in the example which she has cited. If there be a scene in the whole compass of the English drama, distinguished for its unnatural absurdity, it is this one, where the contentious couple are suddenly converted, at the writer's will, into a loving and affectionate pair, by the operation of the following dialogue, which I am tempted to copy, only as an irresistible proof of my assertions:—

Mr. W. (after a pause.) *Mrs. Wrangle—Love!*

Mrs. W. *Mr. Wrangle—My dear!*

Mr. W. I begin to think ——

Mrs. W. What do you begin to think?

Mr. W. That we have exposed ourselves very sufficiently.

Mrs. W. Quite enough in all conscience.—Why would you complain to my father?

Mr. W. Why would you complain to your brother?

Mrs. W. We were both to blame: complaints are very foolish.

Mr. W. Then away with them at once, say I.

Mrs. W. For ever! Let us forbear to gratify our friends by never publishing our disagreements.

Mr. W. And cure the world of its contempt, by never calling upon it for its pity.

Mrs. W. Agreed! here's my hand upon it.

Mr. W. And here's my heart, to which I press you with the warm affection of a husband that will never cool.

Mrs. W. And I return it with the love and duty of a wife, who will never create a murmur nor utter one again.

Mr. W. Why this is happiness without hypocrisy.

Mrs. W. Perfect felicity unfeigned.

Mr. W. Oh! joyous husband!

Mrs. W. Oh! transported wife! (Exit.)

And, let me exclaim, Oh! ineffable nonsense! Yet I would praise it more than Mrs. Inchbald has even done, and I am sure as sincerely, if I could believe that matrimonial quarrels ever terminated with such a cordial resolution in the parties never to renew them. Alas! if conjugal felicity could be purchased by a few exclamatory sentences, and a shake of the hand, who would be unhappy? And we are to suppose, from Mrs. Inchbald's observations, that they may be so purchased, or how could we find that "particularly excellent instruction to the married," which she ascribes to this very scene? Had Cumberland

wished to make the reformation of *Mr.* and *Mrs. Wrangle* morally beneficial, he should have made it gradual and probable, so that the spectator might acknowledge its verisimilitude and be tempted to hope a similar result from the employment of similar means. This is the only way in which fiction can ever promote the welfare of mankind: for when we see events produced by no apparent influence of causes, but by the magic decree of the author's will, we feel too intensely that they are imaginary, and neither hope to produce them in ourselves nor expect to find them in others.

This, however, is the great defect of Cumberland as a dramatic writer: he hastens what he wishes to produce with too much rapidity. He does not leave it possible for the spectator to supply what is wanting, because he has no art in making the deficiency appear just what must be omitted in the brief scenes of a drama. He seems to have regarded himself as a first cause to whom all things were possible, without remembering that his appeal was to be to finite beings who can admit as true only what they can comprehend as such.

In no comedy of Cumberland's is this defect more unpleasantly obvious, perhaps, than in his *Hint to Husbands*, which was acted at Covent-Garden in 1806. Here the scenes are hurried on with a degree of despatch and a disregard of the spectator's right to understand what he is to

believe, which may be very commodious for the indolence of a dramatic writer, but which will be surely injurious to his fame. No time is allowed for the developement of the passions, but every thing happens just as the author requires. The play indeed was deservedly unsuccessful, for besides this prominent deficiency, it wanted every requisite of a good comedy. The character of *Lady Transit* is pleasing: but nothing can be more frivolously inefficient than the attempts at humour in *Dogherty*. This was his last effort to delineate the Irish character, and I think it the last, in merit, that has yet been made by any.

In an address to the *Reader*, which is prefixed to this play, Cumberland reiterates his boast of having "written more for the stage than any one of his nation ever did." Of this numeral renown he seems to have been proud, for he frequently alludes to it: but had his hopes been raised to the acquisition of posthumous fame, I think he would have wished he had written less. Most of his plays exhibit evident marks of rapidity in composition: they want that skilful distribution of the incidents, and that nice observance of probability in their production, which he had ability enough to devise, but had not leisure enough to practise.

Before I dismiss, from my consideration, the dramas of Cumberland, I wish to advert to a peculiarity which has been much forced upon my attention by a regular perusal of them. His

female characters are all drawn with a degree of frankness in love-affairs which a fastidious critic might pronounce to be wantonness. Nor does this peculiarity belong merely to his plays. In his novels it equally prevails. The task of *making love*, as it is termed, he generally throws upon the lady, by providing bashful and timid suitors who require encouragement to declare their passion. It must be allowed that this is unseemly, though Cumberland probably thought it natural. If the reader require to be convinced of this predilection in him for candour and simplicity in females, let him examine many of the interviews between *Arundel* and *Lady Louisa G.*; between *Mortlake* and *Lady Jane*; between *Henry* and *Isabella*; between *Charlotte Rusport*, in the *West Indian*, and *Belcour*; between *Sophia*, in the *Brothers*, and *Belfield*, and between *Emily* in the *Wheel of Fortune*, and *Captain Woodville*. A very cursory inspection of these scenes will shew him that little is left to the lover but silent acquiescence: and if he extend his view through all the plays of Cumberland he will, perhaps, think with me, that what he so uniformly exhibited he practically approved of.

CHAP. XXVI.

Examination of Cumberland's remaining productions.—His MEMOIRS.—Writes the EXODIAD in conjunction with Sir J. B. BURGESS.—Its mediocrity.—Quotation from MOLIERE applicable to Cumberland.—Becomes the editor of the SELECT BRITISH DRAMA.—Engaged in a newspaper which fails.—Establishes the LONDON REVIEW.—The absurdity of its principle demonstrated.—Its particular defects.—Cumberland's ridiculous praise of Mr. TOWNSEND'S ARMAGEDDON.—Patronises Mr. STOTHARD'S painting of CHAUCER'S PILGRIMS.—Publishes his poem of RETROSPECTION a few days before his death.—Examination of it.

As I have thus anticipated the literary progress of Cumberland, I shall devote this chapter to an examination of his remaining productions, and then conclude the volume with such a detail of his personal history, during the period in which he wrote them, as I can procure.

Of his *Memoirs* which hold a distinguished place among his writings, I can have nothing to say here, having had so many occasions of expressing, incidentally, my opinion of them. They will always be regarded as an authentic history of his private and public life, as far as he has thought it

proper to disclose the particulars of either ; and they will always be esteemed for that fund of literary anecdote which they contain, and in the detail of which Cumberland peculiarly excels. A great chasm, however, they must leave in every thing relating to his writings, except the simple statement of their production, or of the events connected with their success or failure : and this chasm it has been my object to fill up in the present work. With what success I have done it, must be decided by others.

In 1807 Cumberland associated himself with Sir James Bland Burges, in the task of composing the *Exodiad*, another sacred epic, founded upon that portion of scriptural history which comprises the history of Moses from the time of his leading the Israelites out of Egypt, to his death upon Mount Horeb. This poem is divided into two parts, and subdivided into eight books. No means are afforded by which to discriminate the respective efforts of the respective writers, and praise or blame, therefore, cannot be distinctly appropriated. This partnership in applause and censure, seems to have been studiously sought by the authors, for they acknowledge, that though they may fail " to leave a monument of their fame, they have succeeded in bequeathing a memorial of their friendship."

Whoever considers the nature of intellectual labour, will be immediately sensible that it is impossible for two men so to exercise their fancy and

judgment, in conjunction, upon any single topic, as to produce a regular and harmonious whole. There will necessarily be a diversity of style, of sentiments, and of language ; and if, in any part, they endeavour to incorporate their distinct productions by a thorough intermixture of sentences, the most discordant effect must be produced. All that can be done by such joint manufacturers is, for each to take his single book or division, and when the whole is written, to unite them with as much dexterity as they can. This was the plan commonly pursued by Beaumont and Fletcher, by Massinger and Decker, and by Dryden and Lee ; and it is the only one by which any probability of success can be entertained. But even then, a general discrepancy will be sufficiently obvious, for, in any extensive work embracing many circumstances and descriptions, and much diversity of incident, it requires all the vigilance of a single author to avoid inconsistencies and contradiction, and how difficult, therefore, if not impossible, it must be for two men to commingle their ideas without confusion or perplexity.

If I would deliver an opinion upon this work, which I might afterwards support by evidence, if required, I should say, that it is inferior, in many parts, to *Calvary*, while, perhaps, it equals that poem in others. The versification is fluent, but seldom vigorous or animated. The observance of scriptural facts is carefully maintained, but they

are too little diversified by poetical imagery. The general character of the work is, I am afraid, languid mediocrity when tried by the test of an epic poem, which, to be any thing, must be great.

Mediocribus esse poetis,
Non dii, non homines, non concessere columnæ.

It is with regret that I deliver this opinion upon the production of a gentleman (Sir James Bland Burges), from whom I once expected some assistance in the present volume, in consequence of a voluntary and polite offer on his part, to which I shall probably have occasion to advert yet more minutely. My undertaking, however, imposed upon me the necessity of telling what I thought, and the reader who has perused these pages will willingly acknowledge, I believe, that I have done so hitherto with fearless sincerity and candour. I must confess, indeed, I have yet to learn that art which Cumberland eminently possessed, of finding prodigies where other men would have found nothing. Yet, far be it from me to accuse him of hypocrisy. I have already said, that I believe it sprung from a warm benevolence of character, an eager desire to think mankind as amiable as he wished them, and their achievements as splendid as he thought them. It was an error, however, and a sickening one, when practised to excess, as Cumberland too commonly did. For myself, I would say with Moliere's *Misanthrope* :

Non, je ne puis souffrir cette lâche methode,
 Qu' affectent la plupart de vos gens à la mode :
 Et jè ne hais rien tant que les contorsions
 De tous ces grands faiseurs de protestations,
 Ces affables donneurs d'embrassades frivoles,
 Ces obligeans diseurs d'inutiles paroles,
 Qui de civilités avec tous font combat,
 Et traitent du même air l'honnête homme et le fat.
 Quel avantage a-t-on qu'un homme vous caresse,
 Vous jure amitié, foi, zele, estime, tendresse,
 Et vous fasse de vous un eloge eclatant,
 Lorsqu'au premier faquin il court en faire autant ?
 Non, non ; il n'est point d'ame un pen bien située,
 Qui veuille d'une estime ainsi prostituée ;
 Et la plus glorieuse a des regals peu chers,
 Des qu'on voit qu'on nous mêle avec tout l'univers :
Sur quelque preference une estime se fonde,
Et c'est n'estimer rien qu'estimer tout le monde.

It appears to me that the last couplet of this extract applies with singular propriety to that pliancy of commendation by which Cumberland was distinguished, and which he bestowed upon all who applied for it in the right way. The praise he gave, however, he was equally willing to receive ; and I have been told, by one who knew him intimately, that no adulation could be too exuberant for his acceptance.

Dr. Drake, perhaps, in some future edition of his *Literary Hours*, may discover that the *Exodiad*, as well as *Calvary*, is embued with the genuine spirit of Milton, and his eulogy would easily outweigh my censure. In me it may be defect of taste or judgment, that I do not estimate this poem more highly : and from a presumption so

extremely probable, I can conceive that every consolation may be derived.

Cumberland, in the latter years of his life, laboured for the booksellers, sometimes anonymously, and sometimes not. Among many schemes to which this sort of employment gave rise, may be reckoned his edition of the *Select British Drama*, in which he undertook to publish a series of those plays, which still take their turn upon the stage, and to preface them with lives of the authors, and a critical examination of each drama. To this task he was perfectly competent; but I have never heard what success attended the plan. In the first number, which contained *Every Man in his Humour*, he has given a succinct history of the rise and progress of the stage; and in his strictures upon Congreve's *Love for Love*, he is justly indignant at his grossness and obscenity.

I should have mentioned that he was associated, in 1803, with Mr. Peltier, Sir James Bland Burges, and some other gentlemen, in projecting and establishing a weekly newspaper, which was intended to maintain a higher literary character than commonly belongs to our daily journals. But it maintained no character at all, and soon fell. Its name I have forgotten.

In 1809 he published the first number of the *London Review*, with the chimerical idea that contemporary criticism could derive advantage from robbing it of its anonymous importance. When the proposals for this work were first issued,

I was forcibly struck with the absurdity of its principle, and communicated my opinions to the public through the medium of a respectable periodical publication. These opinions were confirmed by the destiny of the *London Review*, and the result which I presumed to augur speedily ensued.

The abuses of anonymous criticism have, indeed, been long and loudly complained of, nor is it likely that any remonstrances will diminish the evil. As long as men can attack, secure from retaliation, they will do it; for the leaven of malignity and envy is too intimately incorporated with our nature, not to ferment into action when it may be done with impunity.

It has been thought, however, that an effectual remedy for this evil, would be the certain knowledge of those who propagate it; and that if every man who condemned another were known as the condemner, he would feel the influence of certain moral considerations which now operate but laxly while his deeds are deeds of darkness. That this reasoning is right, as far as the abuse of criticism is considered, must be confessed. There can be no doubt, that he who affixes his name to what he writes, will write more circumspectly than he who does not; but, when it is recollected that the misuse of the critical function is not so flagrant as is commonly believed, it will hardly be thought that every thing would be gained if that misuse were diminished.

In reading an anonymous criticism we read it without any undue bias or partiality; if it have merit, that merit is allowed to have its fair influence upon our minds. We judge of it by itself without any reference to the presumed qualifications of the author; we are not subdued by the authority of a *name*.

If we could suppose that the most eminent names in modern literature would be found in the pages of a review, established upon a principle similar to Cumberland's, I do not think that any advantage would be gained beyond the abolition of some practices in anonymous criticism, which are disgraceful to letters. The rigid integrity of a Brutus or a Cato must not be expected. Literary men constitute a sort of fraternity: they are usually acquainted with each other, or likely to be so; and the feelings of friendship and esteem would be perpetually clashing with the duties of the critic. Will the man, who has dined at my table to day, and partaken of my hospitality and kindness, sit down to-morrow and *avowedly* endeavour to sink my character in the public estimation? No: unless he would be hunted from society he cannot do this; if he would be received as a member of it, he must conform to its duties; and though the book I have published may be bad, or vicious, or erroneous, yet, the condemnation of it must not come *publicly* from the hand of my friend. The cause of sound literature would, therefore, be

injured by such a scheme, and criticism would sink into a mere interchange of civilities and courtesies.

Let it be imagined that such a plan had been projected fifty years ago, and that Johnson, Goldsmith, Burke, Reynolds, Garrick, and other eminent men, had consented to lend it the authority of their names, would it have been possible for them to exercise their judgments with real impartiality? I can conceive that they might, perhaps, have imitated other critical professors in merciless severity towards the humble, the obscure, and the unassuming delinquent, but we should surely have found them sufficiently polite, ceremonious, and affable towards each other.

Nor could it be otherwise, living, as they did, in splendid intimacy together; and the influence of this feeling would have extended beyond themselves and their respective productions. It would have taken in the circle of each man's acquaintance, and embraced, consequently, in its wide circumference, every writer who had risen only to such comparative distinction as might entitle him to their friendship and notice. What then would have been their situation? Between Scylla and Charybdis. If they praised, the world would have accused them of adulation; if they censured, an outcry would have been raised against them for envy and malignity. They could not have avoided self-condemnation on the one hand, or the world's

condemnation on the other. And would they have found an adequate reward for such persecution and trial, in the pecuniary remunerations of a bookseller? The answer is obvious. They would have spurned at the illusion which would mislead them under the guise of candour and honesty, and they would have left to venal and obdurate minds what only venal and obdurate minds could perform.

To such objections the scheme of Cumberland's Review was abstractedly liable: but it exhibited some particular deficiencies, when it made its appearance. Of the *names* that appeared, and whose authority was to overwhelm, as with a torrent, the feeble defences of anonymous criticism, there were not more than two or three that had yet been heard of, and not even the *illusion*, therefore, of signatures respectable in literature was preserved. What then was gained by this *nominal* review? A disclosure which rather weakened than enforced authority: a declaration which destroyed the effect it was intended to produce. Could it, indeed, be imagined that the mere knowledge of the critic was to operate as a charm, and that in consideration of knowing *who* he was, the public would be indifferent about *what* he was? Was it to be supposed that they would prefer *acknowledged* dullness, insipidity, or adulation, to *unacknowledged* wit, learning, and genius? *Omne ignotum pro magnifico*. The very obscurity which belongs to anonymous criticism

increases its power, because, without knowing specifically who writes a particular article, we know, generally, that many of the first literary characters lend their pens to this office, and in the ambiguity which envelopes the question there is room enough for the imagination to act upon a rational basis of credibility.

The fate of the *London Review* will deter all future projectors from any similar undertaking, to which a moral impossibility of success seems to be inevitably attached. Some of Cumberland's coadjutors proved themselves men of talents; and many of the articles were superior to the ordinary compositions of periodical critics. Yet it soon perished: and though this early fate may be partly ascribed, perhaps, to the impression produced by some criticisms of extraordinary imbecility, no display of excellence could have secured it from ultimate failure.

In Cumberland I have no doubt that the undertaking was suggested by a sincere wish to see criticism stripped of that insidious covering beneath which she now aims her assassin blows unseen and unknown. Such was his wish, and it is one in which every man must concur, though every man will feel, perhaps, that the only remedy is one which would entail greater evils than those it amended. Cumberland's opinion with regard to anonymous censure was not hastily adopted. In the twenty-second number of the *Observer* he says,

"I cannot state a case in which a man can be justified in treating another's name with freedom, and concealing his own." Some part of his zeal may perhaps be attributed to the recollection of his own sufferings: and if he believed that every other author partook of his sensibility, it was only a common act of benevolence to endeavour at the extinction of a power beneath which so many writhed.

Of the articles which Cumberland himself wrote for his Review, only one deserves to be remembered, and that is the first in the third number, which contains admirable sketches of those performers with whose merits he had been familiar in his youth.

He seems to have felt the unenviable situation in which an acknowledged critic places himself, by selecting, for his own labours, the productions of recently deceased writers, whom to blame would lead to no future embarrassments. He has departed from this plan only in two or three instances, and one of them provided him with an opportunity of renewing his controversy with Mr. Hayley.

Every one who has inspected the *London Review* must have turned away displeased from the absurd examination of a poem, (Mr. Townsend's *Armageddon*) then only in embryo and not yet in existence; and more than displeasure must have been excited by that strain of servile adulation and that sort of amorous fondness with which the

young man's literary and personal accomplishments are celebrated. The motive was not sufficiently powerful to justify so irregular a proceeding, and I have been told that two of his friends, who fully appreciated the folly he was about to commit, exhausted, but in vain, all their powers of persuasion to induce him to relinquish the idea. What this "super-human" work will be, when it comes forth, if it ever does come forth, is yet to be discovered: but that "fermentation of genius," which was so visible in Mr. Townsend's "expressive countenance," has produced nothing hitherto which candour can commend. It is his misfortune, I am afraid, that Cumberland was his patron. His work is nobly conceived: I have read the arguments of each book with delight: and nothing diminished the satisfaction which I felt, but the mortifying reflection that it is easy to project what it is not easy to perform. The deliberative and executive powers of man are frequently disjoined by an infinite space: the unbodied conceptions of the mind often soar beyond our own powers of adequate delineation. In this condition I imagine Mr. Townsend to be; and I form the opinion from the specimens of his composition produced by Cumberland, which do not contain any of that power of language, that loftiness of imagery, or that metrical skill which must belong to a successful candidate for epic fame. I have looked also into a volume of poems recently published by Mr.

Townsend, and find in them nothing beyond tune-ful mediocrity.

Cumberland's admiration of him, however, I believe to have been sincere: and I wish the event may prove that it was rational. A natural benevolence of character led him to befriend talent wherever he found it, and though his zeal to serve sometimes degenerated into an erroneous appreciation of its object, his heart must be unenviably obdurate who does not honour the principle. One of the latest efforts which he made to assist the progress of genius, was his unsolicited exertion in behalf of my friend Mr. Cromek's picture of *Chaucer's Pilgrims*. He was struck with the admirable execution of the artist, Mr. Stothard, and prevailed upon Mr. Hoppner to give his opinion of its merits in a letter to him, the use of which was granted to Mr. Cromek, to whom the picture belonged, and who had issued proposals for having it engraved by the late ingenious Schiavonetti. In all that Cumberland did on this occasion, he acted purely from a desire to befriend the progress of the fine arts; and as it was no less unexpected than unasked, the grace and value of it were enhanced in proportion.

The last work which he produced, and which was published only a few days before his death, was his poem of *Retrospection*, which commences with a pathetic solemnity heightened by the fulfilment of the prophecy.

World, I have known thee long, and now the hour
 When I must part from thee is near at hand :
 I bore thee much good will, and many a time
 In thy fair promises repos'd more trust
 Than wiser heads and colder hearts would risque.

The greater part of this poem is devoted to the commemoration of the same persons and events as had already been exhibited and discussed in his *Memoirs*; and as it frequently creeps with all the languor of measured prose, the reader sometimes forgets that he has exchanged one production for the other. It is sufficiently querulous, and yet it is full of declarations why the writer should be contented. Many passages from it I have extracted into this volume, where they related to the topics I was upon, and from them a very adequate notion may be formed of the whole. It is written with an easy flow of versification, and contains some pleasant talk about past times : but poetry it has none. Cumberland, indeed, seems to have justly appreciated its character by the motto which he has prefixed.

Neque si quis scibat uti nos
 Sermoni propria, putes hunc esse poetam.—*Hor.*

The domestic retrospections form, perhaps, the most pleasing portions of this work ; for it is in them that feeling predominates, and which, by awakening the sympathy of the reader, lulls his judgment into silent acquiescence. Who, for instance, reading the following lines, could forget the

afflictions of an old man broken down by sorrows and infirmities, while he stopped to pick out a fault or two? He that could, may claim praise for that which speaks better for his head than his heart :—

Well it beseems that hoary head should bow
 In resignation to th' Almighty will.
 No fear but time will furnish griefs enough :
 We need not fabricate them for ourselves.
 Dwell where we will, earth will not always show
 A smooth and smiling surface to our view :
 Our eyes will still be wand'ring where the turf
 Swells into hillocks to denote the spot
 Where some dead friend has tenanted the soil.
 A few brief flowers may form a summer fence
 Around our habitation, but, without,
 The dreary Golgotha of death will lodge
 The great majority of those we lov'd,
 If still the giver of my life delay
 Th' exterminating stroke, and lengthen out
 The date of my mortality, shall I
 Insult his patience with profane complaint,
 When, homeward as I bend my weary way,
 I meet a widowed daughter pale and wan
 With anxious watchings o'er the nightly couch
 Of her dead husband? What a monitor
 Art thou, O Death, to me, whom thou hast spar'd
 Longer by half a century of years
 Than that young warrior "fest'ring in his shroud!"
 I take his hand : 'tis clench'd and cold as stone :
 Dark are the eyes and clos'd, which late I saw
 All bright and beaming with heroic fire—
 Such we must be—so shall we all appear.—

This "widow'd daughter" is still his Marianne, whom he seems never weary of celebrating. She had been recently married to a German officer of

the name of *Jansen*, who accompanied our ill-fated expedition to Walcheren, and was one of the many that fell victims to the malignant influence of the climate.

I have thus gone through my examination of Cumberland's principal works, apportioning my remarks to the comparative importance of the subjects. He wrote upon whatever suggested itself to his mind, and though it may easily be conjectured, therefore, that he did not write with uniformity of excellence, yet, if a list of his productions were made, it would not only be a long one, but an honourable testimony of his talents and industry. When, however, Dr. Drake, in reference to these numerous labours, asserted that, "to no author of the eighteenth century, in polite literature, are we under greater obligations," I presume he forgot both the numerical and intrinsic value of Johnson's writings.

CHAP. XXVII.

Cumberland loses his wife.—Appointed colonel of a volunteer regiment.—His controversy with Mr. HAYLEY.—His meanness of adulation towards his friends.—Exemplified in his praise of Sir JAMES BLAND BURGESS, whom he calls a Homer! —His antipathy to GRAY.—Interested himself in the success of a third theatre.—His benevolence instanced by an amusing anecdote.—His death.—Buried in WESTMINSTER ABBEY.—An oration pronounced over his grave by the DEAN of WESTMINSTER.—The erroneous praise contained in it.—A character of Cumberland's colloquial abilities.—His posthumous pieces.—His family.—His will.—Some observations on Mrs. JANSEN's proceedings respecting one of its provisions.

NOTHING now remains for me to do but to relate the personal occurrences of Cumberland's life during the period in which those productions, already enumerated, were given to the world. They are but few, indeed, and not very interesting; yet they must be told.

At what time he lost his wife he has not specified, but says it was "some time after the death of his eldest son, who died in Tobago." She was so lamentably reduced by illness, in her latter days, that Cumberland's house was inaccessible even to his nearest friends and neighbours: "her nerves being utterly destroyed, and even her recollection

impaired, by the effects of the breaking of a blood vessel, which no art could heal, every step that approached her, threw her into tremours, and it required careful preparation to enable her to support an interview with any of her children, who came at times to pay their duty to her." To a being thus debilitated by disease, death must have been a welcome event; nor could it be much otherwise than welcome to those whose duty it was to endure all the peevish and wearisome caprices of a mind broken down by infirmities.

During his abode at Tunbridge he was in the practice of paying annual visits to a Mrs. Bludworth, of Holt, near Winchester, and while there he sometimes amused himself with slight and trivial efforts of composition. These he has preserved in his *Memoirs*, but they have little merit. That entitled *Affectation* is the best.

When the terror of invasion was in its highest state of aggrandisement, and the people of England, with a promptitude of patriotism which did them immortal honour, rallied round their king and constitution, Cumberland was solicited by the inhabitants of Tunbridge to head them as volunteers, and to which solicitation he acceded. This situation he discharged with such general applause that when the volunteer system was discountenanced, and his corps dismissed, they voted him a sword by the hand of their Serjeant Major, "as a tribute of their esteem for their beloved commander."

In the supplement to his *Memoirs*, which he published in 1806, to supply that barrenness of contemporary history which the tedious details of his Spanish mission had occasioned, he remonstrates with Mr. Hayley, who, in his life of Cowper, had attacked Cumberland for professing too great an admiration of Bentley's character. That Cumberland should have contemplated, with some enthusiasm, an ancestor so eminently endowed as Bentley, may surely be forgiven, for, of all errors, if it were one, it was the most venial. Upon this ground, therefore, Cumberland might have stood, and proudly maintained his right: but, when he censured Mr. Hayley for expressing his opinion of Bentley's qualities as a scholar and critic, he only made himself ridiculous, by shewing that he thought every man was to think of his grandfather with the same excess of fondness that he did.

This is as much as need be said of the matter, adding only that Cumberland is certainly superior to his antagonist in the elegance and mildness of his rebuke, and in the suavity of his language. I wish, however, that he had not confounded Cowper with his biographer, nor strove, while he was combating the one, to cast a shade of opprobrium upon the memory of the other. This was frivolous resentment.

There is, in this supplement to his *Memoirs*, a pleasing accession of anecdote, but it is disfigured, like its preceding pages, by a prostitution of praise.

Cumberland knew not how to employ the language of commendation when speaking of his friends: every man who wrote a verse was a Milton, and every composer of a play was a Shakspeare. The lulling strains of his adulation soothe all alike; and to him might have been said what Dr. Johnson once replied to a lady who was servilely harrassing him with eulogies, "Madam, before you praise me, consider what your praise is worth." Manly commendation, directed to manly attainments, is honourable to the giver and the receiver: but the friskings of a fawning applauder excite only contempt when interested, and only pity when the result of imbecility.

It is curious, too, to remark upon what grounds Cumberland sometimes builds the foundations of his applause. He is absolutely convulsed with admiration when he tells that his friend, Sir James Bland Burges, wrote his poem of *Richard Cœur de Lion*, with more rapidity than Pope translated Homer: but I am afraid they who have formed the most accurate opinion of Sir James' genius will easily believe that he might have written it all in just that time which was requisite to commit it to paper. Yet Cumberland tells him that he writes like Homer: and then naturally wonders that the world has not estimated the merit of his "extraordinary poem." I have no objection, however, that he should be a second Homer, for Dr. Drake has told us that Cumberland was a second Milton.

To the real merits of Sir James Bland Burges, I hope I am as sensible as any man need be: but I feel more sorrow than offence when I see a respectable writer in danger of being transformed into a literary fop by the malignant influence of undeserved praise. Sir James will think he knows the origin of this opinion, and may wander into error perhaps: if he would know the true one, he may wander through his own works. I hope I am incapable of visiting the offences of the man upon the author, as I know I am incapable of praising any man whom I do not think deserving of it: but I will own, that tenderness for a friend would teach me to suppress the opinion whose disclosure would hurt his feelings. Nay, an obligation less solemn than friendship, the remembrance of past courtesies, would impel me to the same forbearance: and Sir James may, therefore, guess why I have now told what I think. Had Johnson been my contemporary, and had he conducted himself towards me with an insincerity which a gentleman might blush at, I might have accused him of it, but I could not, without the charge of impotent malignity, have retaliated, by telling him of his imbecility as a writer.—I now return to Cumberland.

It would be tedious to follow him through all the discursive pages of his supplement, for who wishes to know that Mr. Sharon Turner wrote a letter to him full of compliments, and that he is consequently “one of the best writers, one of

the most learned antiquarians, and most enlightened scholars of his time," that the Earl of Dorchester flattered him with another letter, and that Lord Erskine refused to write him any letter? These things, and many like them, may surely be passed over, without any loss to the reader, or any reproach to myself. It may be mentioned, however, that for the melo-dramatic piece, which was represented at Drury-Lane theatre in commemoration of the illustrious Nelson's death, he received the present of a gold snuff-box ;—and that the Lord Chamberlain refused his license to a more matured effort for the same purpose, which was to have been acted at Covent-Garden on the evening after his public funeral.

Cumberland seems to have shared, with Johnson, an antipathy to Gray. He calls him, in the first volume of his *Memoirs*, by no very cleanly metaphor, " the most *costive* of poets," alluding, I suppose, to the paucity of his production; and in his poem of *Retrospection*, he mentions him with a sort of contumelious pertness, where he parallels his ode on the death of Walpole's cat with the puny effusions of youthful wittlings, whom injudicious admiration would cocker into great poets as Cumberland himself would some of his friends. This prejudice, however, against a man whose writings breathe all the genuine inspiration of poetry, is entitled to very little respect: for it seems to have been enter-

tained by him without any precise conviction of its propriety.

There is some good dramatic criticism in this supplement, and I think the observations of Cumberland, upon the illiberal mode in which theatrical managers or their deputies dismiss the manuscripts of those who unsuccessfully offer them for acceptance, entitled to very great applause. They are evidently the opinions of a man who well knew the subject; and the spirit of candour and tenderness which is displayed in them does honour to his character.

Cumberland passed much of his time at Ramsgate, where he rented a furnished house, and where he wrote the greater part of his *Memoirs*, literally, as he says, "provided with nothing but the mere materials for writing, having left his books and papers in their packages at Tunbridge Wells," where they remained in 1807, when he added his supplement to that work. In occasional visits to this place, to Tunbridge, and to London, he passed the short period that elapsed between the publication of his *Memoirs* and his death.

When the project for erecting a third theatre was vehemently pursued, Cumberland lent it the assistance of his name and talents. Most, if not all, of the addresses, statements, and advertisements, which appeared, were by him. He interested himself in the success of the undertaking with great ardour; and was frequently heard to say that

he only wished to live till its completion, when he could resign his last breath without a desire ungratified.

He had much benevolence of disposition and urbanity of temper. I have heard an anecdote of him which illustrates both. A bookseller, with whom he afterwards had some literary connection, found himself in the Tunbridge stage with an old gentleman and two ladies. The conversation was desultory, and among other topics one of the ladies mentioned that she had been, the preceding evening, to see the comedy of the *West Indian*, and was much delighted with it. "Aye," observed the sagacious bibliopoliſt, "it is a very good comedy to be ſure; a very good one: Mr. Cumberland, the author of it, was once a very great man; a very celebrated man: wrote a great deal, and was much thought of; but, poor man, he has quite written himſelf down; he is out of date now; he is too old to produce any thing worth reading; I am ſorry he does not know this, and keep from tiring the public with his drivellings: it's a great pity."—"Sir," rejoined one of the ladies, interrupting this critical volubility, "that gentleman oppoſite to you is Mr. Cumberland."—"Ma'am! —Sir!—I beg pardon.—I did not mean to ſay any thing diſreſpectful.—I did not think I had the honour of ſitting in the ſame vehicle with ſo celebrated a man.—I am very ſorry.—I merely meant ——" "My dear Sir," ſaid Cumberland

to the affrighted and confounded bookseller, "no apologies; your opinion is, I dare say, a very correct one; I will not dispute it." This courtesy only heightened the embarrassment of the offender, and he continued in no enviable situation till the coach arrived at its destination, when Cumberland politely requested his company to a dish of coffee, as a final proof that he was untouched by his censures. The bookseller assented, and he so soon altered his notions, that he afterwards undertook a very expensive work, to be produced by the man whom he had so recently pronounced to have written himself down.

Cumberland's death was not preceded by any tedious or painful illness. The uniform temperance of his life was such that he might justly hope a calm and gentle dismissal to another state; that euthanasia for which Arbuthnot so tenderly sighed, for which every man must devoutly wish, and which, indeed, as I have heard, was vouchsafed to Cumberland. He was indisposed only a few days previously, and quietly resigned his soul to its maker, at the house of his friend, Mr. Henry Fry, in Bedford Place, Russell Square, a gentleman whom he mentions with great kindness in his *Memoirs*. This melancholy event took place on the 7th of May, 1811.

When his death was known, it excited a very general sensation in the literary world. He had, indeed, lived through so long a period, had written

so much, had acquired so general a reputation as an elegant scholar and author, and had been connected so intimately with the most eminent men of the last half century, that his loss seemed to dis sever from us the only remaining link of that illustrious circle by which the individuals who composed it were still held to us.

He was buried in Westminster Abbey on the 14th of May. His remains were interred in Poet's Corner, near the shrine of his friend Garrick. The funeral was attended by a numerous procession, which reached the abbey about one o'clock, where they were met by Dr. Vincent, Dean of Westminster, the long-remembered friend and early school-fellow of Cumberland. His office must, therefore, have been an affecting one. When the body was placed in the grave, he pronounced the following oration, for a correct copy of which I am indebted to the kindness of his daughter, Mrs. Jansen.

“ Good People : we have committed to the dust the body of Richard Cumberland, a man well entitled, by his virtues and his talents, to repose among the illustrious dead by which, in this place, he is surrounded. No author has written more; few have written better. His talents were chiefly devoted to the stage : his dramas were pure and classical, the characters drawn from high life as well as low life, but all invariably dealt with according to the strict rules of poetical justice ; and we may say of him, what we can say of few dramatists, that

his plays were not contaminated by oaths or libidinous allusions, such as have disgraced the stage in all ages of the drama, and greatly, nay abominably, so at the present day. He was of opinion that the theatre was not merely a place of amusement, but a school of manners. In his prose works he was a moralist of the highest order. In his two great poems, drawn from holy writ, he well sustained the dignified character of our sacred religion, approved himself a worthy teacher of gospel morality, and a faithful servant of his blessed Redeemer. He was not exempt from the failings and infirmities of human nature; but let us remember, that his talents were never prostituted to the cause of vice or immorality; let us contemplate his long and useful labours in the service of God and his country; and may the God of all mercy pardon his sins, and in the resurrection of the just receive him into everlasting peace and glory."

To this affectionate testimony, thus solemnly delivered, I would not willingly object, for I reverence the sacredness of friendship, and acknowledge the influence of tenderness at so pathetic a moment. But when the venerable survivor of Cumberland pronounced of his writings *collectively*, for so I apprehend the sentence, that they were of strict moral tendency, he surely forgot, or he never read, his novels; and when he specifically praised his plays, as being free from "oaths," I must attribute the assertion to the same cause. I will acknowledge, indeed, that Cumberland's

offences of this nature were much fewer than those either of his predecessors, contemporaries, or successors; but they were too frequent, notwithstanding, to justify the unqualified eulogy of Dr. Vincent.

In the first edition of this work, I ventured to establish this opinion, by a selection of numerous instances from Cumberland's plays, in which he had employed unmeaning and unnecessary oaths; and though I was aware the catalogue would carry a sort of *prima facie* condemnation with it, yet I was tempted to introduce it, because I was unwilling to be thought an accuser without proof, a practice too common in modern criticism; and, also, because I thought it calculated to refute a very positive and very important praise bestowed upon him by a man, whose praise is too valuable to be lavished with impropriety. This view of the attempt has since been sanctioned by the approbation of a periodical critic; but, in a correspondence which took place between Mrs. Jansen and myself, subsequently to the publication of this Life, and relating to some of the opinions which I had expressed of her father's writings, that lady signified her wish that the list should be expunged in any future edition of the present work. As I could easily imagine the feelings which might lead to such a wish, in the bosom of a daughter tenderly attached to her father's memory, and as I had no very violent affection for the passage in question, I was induced, from a real desire to meet the re-

quest of Mrs. Jansen to cancel them in this edition ; and I have done so with the greater pleasure and alacrity, from the candid interpretation which she put upon my motives, in the censure which I unwillingly pronounced upon her conduct, with respect to the fulfilment of her father's will. The reader will find, in the second preface, some further observations upon this subject ; I wish, now, to make two or three upon the authentic copy of Dr. Vincent's oration.

“ In his prose works,” says he, “ he was a moralist of the highest order.” Without any desire to detract from the moral estimation in which Cumberland's writings are generally held, I must strenuously repeat that this character does *not* apply to his novels, however appropriate it may be in reference to his other productions. I cannot suppose Dr. Vincent capable of perverting truth on an occasion so solemn and so sacred, as that when he delivered the preceding opinion ; I respect and venerate his character too much to believe it ; neither can I believe falsehood, though unintentional. Dr. Vincent could not, if the office were seriously enjoined him, read the novels of Cumberland, and especially his *Henry*, and maintain that they are of *strict moral tendency*. Not even affection for the memory of his departed friend would induce him to say that ; and if, therefore, he spoke from what he believed to be his own knowledge, and not from the opinions of others, it can only be concluded that more serious and more

solemn avocations have effaced, from his mind, all recollection of scenes and descriptions which, if he ever read at all, he must have read with disapprobation. I shall dismiss the subject by observing, that the censure which has been bestowed upon Cumberland in the course of this work, for his immorality, applies *solely* and *exclusively* to his novels.

For the following sketch of Cumberland's colloquial talents I am indebted to the obliging kindness of Mr. Hewson Clarke, a gentleman associated with him in the *London Review*, and to whom, as he has told me, Cumberland intended to confide some private documents and papers for publication after his death. This scheme, however, his sudden decease frustrated.

“The colloquial efforts of Mr. Cumberland were in no degree above the ordinary level. He was not peculiarly distinguished for the profundity of his detached observations, or the brilliancy of his occasional repartees; to warm or extended argument he had an invincible aversion, and nature had denied him the polished fluency of his friend Sir James Bland Burges. He never *led* the conversation of his social circle, or sustained its vigour by the animation of his influence. Yet, his casual remarks, when they were not distinguished by acuteness or brilliance, were characterised by that *terse felicity* of expression which constitutes the chief excellence of his *Memoirs*; if he did not predominate in conversation, he gave relief to the colloquial contests of more ambitious speakers, and if he seldom

poured forth the treasures of his own intellectual stores, he displayed peculiar dexterity in the formation of hints, and the application of questions, that might call into display the natural or acquired endowments of his friends.

“ It may account, in some degree, for the extent of his colloquial reputation, that his deportment was in the highest degree impressive and engaging. The smile that played upon his lip embellished many a common-place sentiment, and the graceful, yet dignified elegance of his address, gave weight to opinions that from a less-favoured speaker would have been received with contemptuous silence or acquiescent indifference. Though a Johnson might, in the presence of Cumberland, have felt his own superiority, he would not have ventured to display it: even while he unconsciously unveiled the less amiable features of his character, he averted the resentment of his auditors, or softened their dislike by the fascination of his manner, and those who could not but acknowledge his susceptibility to the minor vices, were astonished, on reflection, at the coldness of their dislike, and the reluctance of their condemnation.

“ He was so fond of flattery himself that he supposed it to be acceptable to his friends, even in the most disgusting form, or in the most exuberant proportions. He was the easy and delighted dupe of every juvenile parasite, who found it convenient to barter adulation for patronage; and the first number of the *London Review* bears melancholy

evidence, that his own fame, and the gratification of the public, were not of sufficient importance to outweigh the grateful drivelling, or the fawning meanness of a youthful protégé, ' who melted the last guinea into a picture-frame for his honoured portrait, to be hung as a reverential monitor above his chimney-piece.' ”

My opinions upon Cumberland's literary character have been so fully delivered in the course of this work, that any general expression of them is rendered superfluous. His writings were numerous, but unequal, and a very small portion of them will be required by posterity. What he published, however, was only a part of what he actually composed, and we may expect, from his daughter, some of his posthumous pieces. Before he died he solicited, in an humble address on the cover of the *European Magazine*, the subscriptions of his friends and the public, to a quarto edition of his unpublished dramas, and I have been told that the present Lord Lonsdale and Sir James Graham, generously answered the appeal, by sending, each of them, a hundred pound bank note, as the amount of their subscription, politely expressing, at the same time, their regret that Cumberland should have been compelled to so great a humiliation. This munificence deserves to be recorded, and I feel a pleasure in doing it. Some

progress in the printing of these plays has been made, for they are announced, at the end of the poem of *Retrospection*, as being in the press ; and I am informed it is Mrs. Jansen's intention shortly to give them to the world.

Cumberland's family consisted, at his death, of two sons and three daughters. Both the sons are in the service of their king and country. The one, *Charles*, who married the daughter of General Matthew, is in the army, and the other, *William*, a post-captain in the navy. His first and second sons, *Richard* and *George*, died abroad ; *Richard*, (who married the eldest daughter of the late Earl of Buckinghamshire), at Tobago, and *George*, in America, where he was killed at the siege of Charlestown. His eldest daughter, *Elizabeth*, married Lord Edward Bentinck, brother to the late Duke of Portland ; his second, *Sophia*, married William Badcock, Esq. a gentleman of whom Cumberland speaks in no manner calculated to excite esteem. Of his third daughter, *Frances Marianne*, I need not repeat what has been already told. Besides this immediate posterity, he numbered nineteen grandchildren, " some of whom," he says, " have already lived to crown my warmest wishes, and I see a promise in the rest, that flatters my most sanguine hopes."

- By his will he bequeathed the whole of his property to his youngest daughter ; and as the reader

may wish to peruse this document, I have transcribed it :

“ WILL OF RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

“ In the name of God, Amen. Conscious that I am of sound mind, I declare myself to be competent in all intellectual qualifications for making this my last Will and Testament. Whereas my first cousin, George Ashby, of Haselbeach, in the county of Northampton, Esquire, did solemnly promise and assure me, that he would by will provide for my youngest daughter, Frances Marianne, which promise and solemn assurance he gave to me, when last I was at his house, upon the death of my sister, Mrs. Mary Alcock ; and whereas the said George Ashby, Esquire, has since deceased without fulfilling that his solemn promise and assurance given in behalf of my daughter, I do hereby give and devise to her Frances Marianne, my daughter, all my real and personal estates, property, goods, chattels, books, manuscripts, or by whatever other designation the law may interpret them, to her sole use and behoof, subject, however, to the payment of my debts.

“ And whereas I am intitled, by my mission to Spain, to expect some compensation or pension to my relict or relicts, after my decease, I do hereby direct my said daughter Marianne, to make application to the proper office for the same, through

the means of such friend or friends as she can intercede with and prevail upon to undertake that friendly task, for the sake of her deceased father, and may God in his mercy reward the generous friend, whoever it shall be, who gives her that benevolent assistance !

“ Now with respect to my manuscripts, I recommend her to consult and advise with the three following friends of me, whilst living, and who I trust will not desert my interest with posterity when I am dead ; these are Sir James Bland Burges, Baronet, Richard Sharpe, Esquire, of Mark-lane, merchant, and Samuel Rogers, Esquire, of Park-place, banker ;—I pray and entreat of them to select, arrange, collect, compile, and put together, in form and order, as to their judgments shall seem best, my works, which are unpublished ; my manuscripts, which they may deem worthy to be published, either by subscription, or how else, for her use and benefit ; imploring the Almighty God to bless them for the charitable work, the assurance of which even now gives peace and comfort to my soul.

“ I pray my children and grandchildren not to take in ill part this my will in favour of an unmarried child, who has not, like them, a profession to resort to, but would be left to the wide world unfriended and forlorn, without the little I may have to bequeath to her, deserted as she now is by the

relation on whose word I confidently built my hopes. I desire her, at her own discretion, to give from my personal effects or pictures, or whatever else she may have in possession, some token or tokens, to every one of my sons, my daughters, and my grandson, Richard Cumberland, on whom I devoutly invoke the protection and favour of my all-merciful God.

“ I have lived in charity with all men ; I have met unkindness, but never resented it ; I know not what revenge is. Such talents as God gave me I have devoted to his service, and the moral and religious edification of my fellow-creatures. I have loved my God, my Country, and my Friend. When Mr. Ashby deceived me, it wounded my heart, but it has not shaken my confidence in others.

“ In my faith as a Christian I am firm. I have published my sentiments ; I am sincere in them ; I am no hypocrite.

“ I declare this to be my last will and testament, signed and witnessed as below, and God forbid any who inherit one drop of my blood should litigate or dispute it. Take notice, I interlined *Frances* twice with my own hand, having overlooked it.

“ In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal, this fourth day of April, in the year of our Lord, eighteen hundred and two.

(L.S.) “ RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

“ Signed and sealed, published and declared, by the said testator, as and for his last will and testament, in the presence of us, who, in his presence, and at his request, have hereunto set our names as witnesses thereunto,

“ HENRY FRY, Solicitor, Tunbridge Wells,

“ THOMAS CAMIS, Tunbridge Wells,

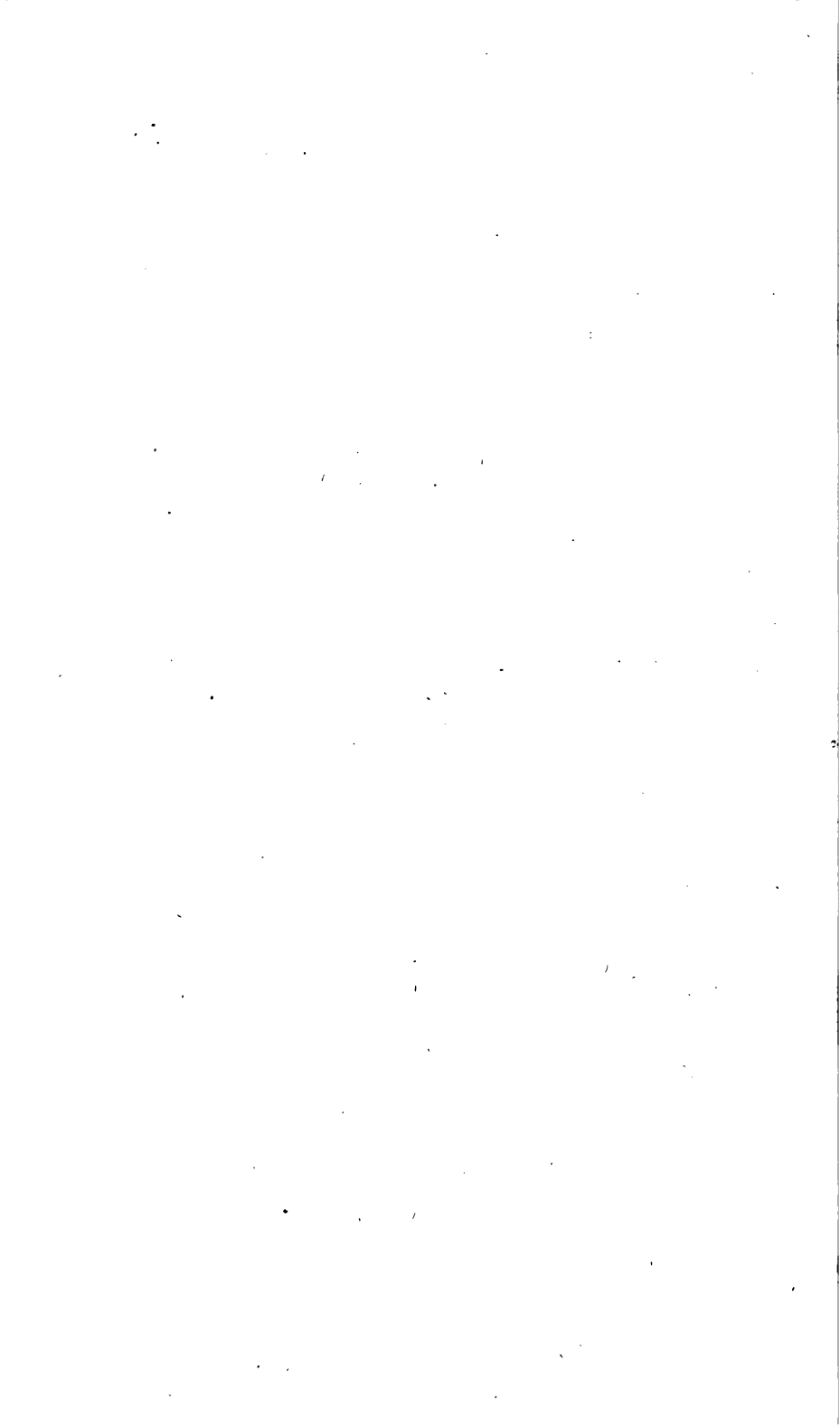
“ JAMES CAMIS, Tunbridge Wells.”

The above was proved in the Consistorial and Episcopal Court of the Lord Bishop of London, the 22d day of October, 1811, by Frances Marianne Jansen, widow (formerly Cumberland), the daughter of the said deceased ; the sole executrix according to the tenor of the said will.

Property sworn under £450.

When I animadverted at p. 476, of this work, upon the seeming impropriety of disregarding Cumberland's particular and public request, that the protection of his posthumous papers should be confided to his three friends, Sir James Bland Burges, Mr. Sharpe, and Mr. Rogers, I had not seen his will : and I will freely own that my astonishment was greatly heightened when I found in it that request not only repeated, but solemnly enforced by the pathetic declaration, that the anticipation of their kind offices “ *gave peace and*

comfort to his soul." When, however, after reading this declaration, I remember that the daughter to whom he has entrusted the fulfilment of all his other bequests, has declined the interference of those friends, I can only hope that some private motive, powerful beyond what I can easily conceive, and into which I have no right to examine, has influenced her decision. I should be happy, indeed, to hear that it is so ; for the wishes of the dead are too sacred, too impressive, and too important sometimes, not to make every man desirous that they should be reverentially obeyed by the living ; and it is from the operation of this feeling alone that I have expressed my opinion upon so delicate a topic.



APPENDIX.

IN the month of April last I received, through my publishers, a packet from Charlestown, South Carolina, containing the following letters. They were sent to me by a gentleman of the name of BEE, with whom I have not the pleasure of any acquaintance, and to whose politeness and attention therefore, I am only so much the more indebted. In his letter accompanying them, he observes, “ It is a little singular that Mr. C. should have totally omitted (in his Memoirs) the circumstance to which these papers relate; as his anxiety upon the occasion seems to have been great, and as the transaction furnishes a justification of his ministerial patrons against that charge of *neglect* which Mr. C. so frequently insinuates.”

I perfectly agree with this sentiment, and it is rather with a view to shew that Cumberland was

not wholly deserted by the ministry, than from any peculiar impression of the excellence or interest of the letters themselves that I insert them here. The concluding one, indeed, is well written, and contains some just indignation against the American principles of his English friend. They may, at least, be considered as curious documents, if not as valuable specimens of epistolary composition.

August 23, 1812.

W. M.

No. I.

Downing-Street, Sept. 30, 1764.

Dear Sir,

I am favoured with your letters of July 14th, 16th, and August the 1st. I have likewise received the two hundred dollars by the Union, Captain Smith; and shall to-morrow send to enquire after the pipe of Madeira, by Captain Muir, the bill of lading for which I have received in your letter of August the 1st. I heartily congratulate you on your safe arrival, and the reception that you met with from all people with whom you are to be concerned: I think myself much bound to Mr. Doyley for his politeness to you, and I wish I could render him any services in return; so I beg you will assure him. I condole with Mr. Guerard on the loss of his worthy father, and I make no doubt that he will inherit his virtues. You have stated my account with Mr. Guerard perfectly right, and he is now discharged from any further demands from me. I have not yet sold the dollars; I hear, however, at the Carolina Coffee-house, that 4s. 6d. will be as much as I can possibly get for them; nevertheless, I like them better than bills of exchange, both because they

are present cash, and principally because you suffer no discount upon them. I am glad you was in receipt of this money immediately, on your arrival, as cash must, undoubtedly, be of use to you in the set out; my time of wanting money is about the latter end of January, or in the month of February; and what remittance soever you can make me by that time, with tolerable convenience to yourself, I shall be thankful to you for, as I have a particular account this year to settle, which will, for the future, make me a much less troublesome solicitor to you. I am to thank you for the account you have hitherto collected of the nature and advantages of your office, as likewise for the table of fees; I wish from my soul (now am I purely self-interested in that wish), that you may find it more lucrative than we apprehend it to be; your ingenuous declaration of those profits, (be they what they will) shall never be turned against you. I need not press you to push the matter of the gaol with all your interest and attention; you tell me that you pay 500*l.* currency per annum for Mr. Doyley's house; if you can remove that incumbrance, the advantage shall not singly be mine, but we will jointly benefit ourselves by the event; I think now is your time for this point, during the lieutenancy of Mr. Bull, who is an affable, easy, and upright gentleman, and well beloved in the province. I have consulted my patent; the offices it recites are, *Provost Marshal, Clerk*

of the Peace and Clerk of the Crown; it mentions not *Clerk of the Pleas*. You remember that I told you I could wish you would let the offices of Clerk of the Crown and Clerk of the Peace to any person who would pay down a reasonable fine for them, and hold them free of any deductions on account of fees, during the term of your lease of Provost Marshal, or longer, if you think fit. The salary arising therefrom, you know I reserve; and you will likewise remark, that the said salaries are paid only to Lady-day last, which, I presume, is the time of payment from the Receiver-General. I have now the satisfaction to acquaint you, that I saw your father, mother, and sister, in good health, at Peterborough this week, who desire affectionately to be remembered to you; your father talks of sending your brother to you sometime or other, and I think he will make you a nice clerk. Pray present Mrs. Cumberland's and my compliments and good wishes to Mrs. Pinckney, and thank her for her designed favours to my little ones. I inclose you a receipt for the amount of the wine and dollars. I beg you will ever persist in believing me,

Dear Sir,

Your sincere friend and

Faithful humble servant,

RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

P.S. All alarms of a rupture with France and

Spain are now terminated, as each power has receded from their unjust attempts, and ordered indemnification for them.

Roger Pinckney, Esq. &c. &c.

No. II.

(Secret and Confidential).

Downing-Street, Oct. 1, 1764.

Dear Pinckney,

I write to you now on a subject of a very nice and delicate nature, in a matter where my interest is deeply concerned, and in consequence of a hint which has been thrown out to me this morning, since my writing of yesterday's letter to you. I should not do justice to your heart, if I scrupled your friendship to me, and I should pay an ill compliment to your judgment, if I doubted your discretion in the management of the affair I am now to submit to you. Mr. Saxby, the Receiver-General of South Carolina, in conversation with me this morning upon the subject of your employment, suggested to me a proposal, so palpably advantageous to me, and so feasible withal, that I embrace the first opportunity of communicating it to you, and intreating your good offices on the occasion. I do not believe that it is a necessary inducement to engage your services in the affair, that it will be no interruption to your interest and advantage; but I think

it needful for my own justification to assure you, that I would engage in no plan where you should be excluded from the benefits you justly deserve. Mr. Saxby tells me that the Province of South Carolina are extremely desirous of purchasing my patent of Provost Marshal, and annexing it to their government, whereby they may appoint their own sheriff, as their neighbours do; and that he is confident, they will give me such a price for it as shall not leave me the least room for hesitation about parting with it; nay, he suggests to me, that they will vest as much money in the English funds as shall bring me in the same revenue as my office now produces me; which, you see, is turning my annuity into a perpetuity. It is superfluous to tell you that this would be such an accession to my large and growing family, such a relief to a father's mind, as would make my pillow, for the rest of my life, easy to me; the thing is too obvious to need explanation. He persuades me that the Assembly would give me five thousand, nay, perhaps, six thousand pounds sterling, which, you know, would not lessen my income, and be an accession to my fortune of so much money. Now I make no doubt that I could procure his Majesty's consent to annihilate the patent, and vest the power of appointing their own sheriff in the Government of South Carolina; the reasonableness of the request, and the expediency of the measure, so salutary to the province, and so eco-

nomical with regard to the public, would, I dare say, when supported by the influence of my patron, carry me through the measure. Your lease you know could not be dissolved; nay, in that case, you would have an opportunity of improving the conditions on which you hold it, or sell the remainder to advantage. The part, therefore, I now wish you to act, is to throw out a hint to some of the leading members of the Assembly,—*that you have no authority from Mr. Cumberland to suppose he would part from his employment to them, but, however, that you do conceive he would listen to advantageous terms; that those terms should be to vest as much money in the English funds as should produce an equivalent to him for his present* reservation.* In consequence of such an agreement with the patentee, the province may build a gaol at public expence, and appoint their own sheriff for ever after; by which means, you see, that, although I sell only an annuity, they, in fact, purchase a perpetuity, and therefore should pay me accordingly. Mr. Saxby (who is a very temperate, judicious man), in consequence of this idea, proposes to me not to push the affair of the public gaol, because, if they were to grant that, he thinks they would be more indif-

* Or suppose the terms hereafter to be proposed were these, viz. Ten years purchase of the whole amount of the office, which would certainly be sufficiently advantageous to the Province, and abundantly so to the Patentee.

ferent about the purchase. I think there is good sense in this opinion, and therefore wish you would be easy upon that subject, till we see the result of this affair.* I must not appear forward and eager in the offer, so that I could wish you would affect to speak of it at a distance, and as if without authority. In short, let your wisdom, your friendship, and the present face of men and things, dictate your part to you. I can give no instructions at this distance, except in the general. I throw myself upon your discretion. You can conceive what happiness it would bestow on my life, if I could accomplish a point of such consequence, and I know you will feel for me, and act for me accordingly. I beseech you to lose no time nor conveyance in writing to me, and to write fully, freely, and confidentially in all points. Think not I can ever betray or neglect your interest, while you are serving and promoting mine ; in short, believe me as much yours as you could wish a friend to be.

RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

Oct. 2. P. S. It occurs to me that you might make good terms with the province (in case this project takes place) for the term in your lease ; as they would be glad to come into absolute disposal. I consider likewise, that though *I sell it* on the

* Upon second reflection I dont see the force of this objection of Mr. Saxby's, and think the jail is a measure not to be waved.

idea of its bringing to me a revenue of no more than 240*l.* per annum; yet, *they would buy it* as an employment worth the whole amount of it on the spot, and, consequently, would have it extremely cheap. For call the whole amount of the revenue (divided now between you and me) to be 600*l.* per annum, if they give 6000*l.* for it, they have a perpetuity at ten years purchase.

Roger Pinckney, Esq. &c. &c.

No. III.

Downing-street, February 8, 1765.

Dear Pinckney,

I have just received your favour of the 17th of December, which I heartily thank you for; I am likewise to acknowledge the receipt of the bill of exchange for one hundred pounds, which was duly honoured, and 130 dollars, by the Two Friends, which together, leave a balance as you state it; and I believe, in a former letter, I have particularised all my receipts, and corrected a little mistake in your own disfavour; let this suffice on the present occasion. The dollars which you charge at 4*s.* 6*d.* (though, when I first received them they were rather below price) yet I contrived to lose nothing by them; and silver is now risen, so that by the last parcel, which are yet undisposed of, I shall gain about 1½*d.* per dollar; so that you need not be out of humour with

them, as I think them the best returns you can make. Your Madeira, which I did not speak highly of at first, will, I believe, turn out better than I apprehended, and come reasonable to me.

I cannot sufficiently express my grateful acknowledgements to you for your friendly attention to my interest and happiness, and the kind manner in which you receive the proposal I submitted to you in my private letter. Indeed, Sir, I must confess to you, that I am exceedingly anxious to bring a point of such vast advantage to me to bear; and I believe I may venture to say, I should not miscarry in the attempt, if the Assembly were as willing to treat as I am told, and believe that they are. I am rejoiced to hear that you are likely to carry the measure of a public jail, which was so strongly recommended by the Board of Trade. It will be an event very favourable to my office, and to us both; and at the same time will entitle me to better terms in the disposal of it. Mr. Saxby has this moment left me; I have had a long conversation him; he encourages me to hope that the Assembly will accede to my terms, which shall simply be these: "So much money
"vested in the English funds, as will produce
"the net income remitted to me from my employ-
"ment." This I mean to make the ground-plot of the transaction, and though these are conditions extremely favourable to a life-holder, yet you see that they purchase a perpetuity, and one not of

the reserved value, but of the entire. Mr. Saxby has been so kind as to say, that if I can bring matters to no conclusion till he returns to Charlestown, which will be in August next, that he will take my power of attorney, and negociate the business for me; he at the same time says there is no doubt of your being preserved in the office. I shall therefore make no further movement, than in submitting the affair, as I now do, to your judgment, to open it as you think best, and to whom you think best, either entirely, or in part; but if you think it wiser to reserve it for his arrival, you will act according to your own discretion. In the mean time I think that the business of the public jail should be pushed with all your influence; for let the event be what it will, that must be a favourable circumstance.

I do not wonder that the Province are dissatisfied with their chief justice, for the little I saw of him did not give me advantageous impressions. I entirely commend your conduct with respect to him, and I make no doubt of your making both yourself and your office respectable. I rejoice at the account you give me of your health, and I hope you will observe the same cautious attention to it, and not endanger it either by excess of fatigue or conviviality. Your journey must have been very new and grotesque; and I heartily wish I could have been present at the scenes of wild original nature, which you must have met

with, without the pains and labour you must have taken in arriving there.

I shall attend to the matter of the fees, and as I have just now taken an office in the Board of Trade, it is possible I may be able to assist you in them. The West-India Governments have some of them made a horrible reduction of fees. Heaven forbid that their example should be followed on the Continent!

You will direct to me at the Plantation Office, in Whitehall, London. Your friends at Peterborough were well, when I heard last; and I shall take care to convey your compliments to the bishop and family. Mrs. Cumberland joins me in respects and sincere good wishes to Mrs. Pinckney and yourself.

Believe me, most truly,

Dear Sir,

Your faithful and most obedient

Humble Servant,

RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

Roger Pinckney, Esq. &c. &c.

Feb. 11, 1765. P. S. I open my letter again to tell you that I have this day paid to Messrs. Robert Harris and Co. your draft for twenty-seven pounds, which was drawn at twelve months date.

R. C.

No. IV.

Downing-Street, February 27, 1765.

Dear Pinckney,

I wrote to you by the Little Carpenter, Captain Muir, and I now beg your care and furtherance of the inclosed letter to General Shirley, which has a paper in it of considerable consequence. With respect to your draft of office fees, taken by the Provost Marshal, I have abstained from laying them before the Board of Trade, because that enquiry is dropt, and to revive it might possibly be of prejudice to your office, but could not be any benefit. I acquainted you in my last that I had paid your bill, at twelve months date, for £27; and when you remit any more money, I shall be glad to receive it in dollars, for they bear a premium. I am, Dear Sir,

Most faithfully your's,

RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

No. V.

Downing-Street, March 18, 1765.

Dear Pinckney,

I cannot let your brother depart without writing a line to you, though I have nothing to add to my last packet, by the Minerva. As I am likely to pass my summer here, in London, till the time of Mr. Saxby's departure, I shall, before that period, hope to accomplish my point with respect to the office you now execute, as far as relates to the procuring his Majesty's permission

to make over the patent to the assembly of South Carolina. The process I intend to follow is this, first, to get council's opinion upon the legality of the measure, of which, I believe, there is no doubt; secondly, to get a recommendation of the proposal from the Board of Trade, as a matter of public utility to the Province, and then entreat of Lord Halifax to lay it before his Majesty, for his assent. By Mr. Saxby I will send over full powers, and your assistance and concurrence will lay me under lasting obligations.

I hope you will carry your point about the erecting a public gaol, which I think will not only be a mutual benefit, but will enhance the value of my post upon sale.

Your brother is a very promising youth, and under your eye, will, I dare say, fix advantageously in Charles Town; as he seems likely to be handsome, you must look out for a girl of good fortune, and see if you cannot lay him in; which, I suppose, in your climate is more practicable than with us.

All happiness and success attend you and your's.

I shall be glad of my remittances in dollars, as there is something gained by them. I told you I had paid your bill of £27.—Let me hear frequently from you. I am, Dear Sir,

Your most faithful,

Humble servant,

RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

I hope you forwarded my letter to General Shirley.

No. VI.

Parliament-Street, July 31, 1765.

Dear Pinckney,

I am favoured with your letter of the 9th of May last, and with it have received the bag of dollars and doubloons of gold which accompanied it, the amount of which you will see stated at the bottom of this letter. I am sorry you have suffered any uneasiness at not hearing from me in acknowledgement of former remittances, which have come duly to hand ; I hope your apprehensions have been long since removed by the arrival of my letters ; and, for the future, I wish that no alarm may be given on this account, as there is so long a passage between us, so uncertain a communication, and I am afraid I must add, to my own discredit, so irregular a correspondent. However, suffer me now to acknowledge the receipt of monies you have received on my account, prior to your commencing my deputy, in full ; for which this shall be your further discharge.

I know, very well, there was a small balance due to you upon your former remittances, which was properly stated in one of my letters to you, and credit given you for it ; but as I have no copy of that letter, I cannot so easily make out the exact account, as refer you to my letter and your own accounts, which, I dare say, are kept clearer than mine are. The dollars I sold at 5s. 3¼d. per ounce, and was

told it was a good price ; I disposed of them to Mr. Bland, a banker of good reputation at the corner of Birchin Lane ; but he would allow no more than £3. 6s. for the doubloons, which you expected would have bore a premium ; however, you have saved freight, and that is something : in a separate paper enclosed you will see my account and receipt.

With respect to the measures you have taken, and the discourse you have held with the leading persons in the Assembly, both relating to the affair of the sale of the patent, and to the erection of a public gaol, I persuade myself the steps you have taken in both matters have been perfectly prudent and friendly. It gives me great pleasure to hear you say that the business of the public gaol is in such forwardness ; nothing can add more to your comfort and security, and of course to mine ; and it will give me the highest satisfaction to hear that, upon the meeting of the Assembly this month, the Act has been passed ; I can assure you, and them, that it will be highly agreeable to government here.

Your conduct, your integrity, and your friendship, in the other article relating to the patent, I rely upon with the utmost tranquillity. As we set forth in this undertaking upon principles of honour and confidence, so, I dare say, no motives of self-interest will divert either of us from the sentiments of friendship we entertained for each

other at the outset. I see every thing open and sincere in your conduct, and as this point is an object of such vast importance to me and my family, I am sure you will serve me in it faithfully and to the best of your power ; and, at the same time, I hope you will believe that I shall ever have too much honour to allow you to be a sufferer by your good services to me.

The leading men of the Assembly, you tell me, doubt of my being able to carry the point, from the tenacity of government : I will not say positively I can, but presumptively I will affirm to them that I can ; and especially if their bill for the establishment of Circuit Courts passes into an Act, it will almost draw my petition along with it. The method I shall propose to take, (if they will join with me in it) is this ; to procure a favourable report to be made from the Board of Trade to the Secretary of State, in consequence of a joint memorial both from their agent and myself ; such a report, I flatter myself, I shall find little difficulty in obtaining from my station in that office, and if they will empower their agent to co-operate with me, (as I know him very well) and, at the same time, will furnish him with full powers for concluding and executing the agreement, I make no doubt of carrying the measure through, and of putting them into possession of the patent. I have talked this language to Mr. Saxby, and he is so good as to say he will convey my sentiments to his friends in the

Province, and will support the design to the best of his power; he thinks of leaving England in about a month; by him you shall hear from me again.

I wish you all satisfaction in the execution of your Province, and should have been heartily glad had it exceeded your expectations in point of profit and ease, as much as I fear, by what you tell me, that it is likely to fall short of them. With respect to the office of clerk, I must leave that entirely to your management, and am sorry it is so poor an office: if I can give the chief a lift, you may depend upon it I will.

Mrs. Cumberland and my family, as well as the bishop and his, are in good health. I heartily wish that Mrs. Pinckney's health may be re-established, and that you may enjoy all happiness and prosperity, being with great truth,

Dear Sir,

Your most faithful and

Sincere humble servant,

RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

P. S. I hope you received the bill of exchange I sent you, on Mr. Tucker, of New Providence, for £100. sterling. I sent a duplicate soon after. I beg of you to find a conveyance for the inclosed letters, and to charge to my account the expenses thereby incurred.

R. C.

No. VII.

Parliament-Street, August 30, 1765.

Dear Pinckney,

I have just now received your favour by the Beuffain, Captain Daniel Curling, containing an invoice for 500 dollars, and inclosing a draft for £50. sterling. As I am unwilling to lose the opportunity of acknowledging this to you by the conveyance of Mr. Saxby, I write immediately before I have sold or received the dollars; but, however, this acknowledgement for the present will serve as my receipt and your discharge; and if the dollars turn out as well as the last did, (which I believe there is no doubt of) you will be creditor to me in a larger sum than you state. However, by the first subsequent opportunity you shall have my state of the account drawn out. I thank you most heartily for your expedition and punctuality, and am not only better, but much speedier, paid than ever I was before.

With respect to the measure of selling my patent to the Province, my short conception is, that if the Assembly will empower their agent to co-operate with me, the business may be effected; and, if they will likewise authorize him to conclude the bargain, we shall not disagree upon the matter: my terms are, "as much money vested in the English funds, as shall produce to me a sum equal to my reserved rent." If the Assembly pass an Act for the erection of a public

gaol, I should think such a step would forward an accommodation between us.

As Mr. Saxby started the suggestion to me, and has promised to support it in the Province to the best of his power, I have possessed him of so much of my resolution as is needful for his information. I shall, however, not only pay due regard to every hint and advice of your's, but do greatly and principally depend upon your kind offices for success. Indeed I cannot sufficiently thank you for the assurances you give me; for nothing had I ever more at heart than the present affair.

I sincerely hope your fatigues will not be attended with any ill consequences to your health, and wish that they may answer every purpose of your interest. I should be obliged to you, if you will pay an attention to Mr. Saxby, as far as is compatible with your own sentiments. I have inclosed to you a letter to Governor Shirley, which I will beg you to provide a conveyance for. I likewise trouble you with an official letter to Lieut.-Governor Bull, which you will please to deliver to him.

My wife and family are in good health. The bishop and his were well, when I heard last of them; accept my constant good wishes; and ever believe me, Dear Sir,

Your most faithful and

Obedient humble servant,

RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

No. VIII.

Parliament-Street, Jan. 15, 1766.

Dear Pinckney,

It was yesterday asserted, by the great Mr P—t, in the House of Commons, that the British Parl——t had no right to tax the American Colonies, who were not therein legally represented. It is universally concluded, from what past on the part of administratron, in consequence of this gentleman's opinion, that the Stamp Act will be absolutely revoked and rescinded. If so, amidst the universal joy and good humour which will prevail throughout America upon that event, perhaps the interrupted measure of a public good may be resumed by your legislature; and the bill, already twice read, may be past, and as soon as it is transmitted hither, I will procure it a speedy confirmation. I send you this early notice, hoping you may put matters into a train against a proper opportunity.

I need not repeat to you the thing I have so much at heart, which is the sale of my patent. I may venture to promise that I can procure an absolute transfer of it to the Assembly, if they will purchase it upon reasonable terms: I hope you will confer with Mr. Saxby upon this matter, to whom I write by this opportunity. Forgive my frequent iteration of this subject, but consider the importance of it to me, and you will, I

am sure, promote my interest to the best of your power.

I am, Dear Sir,
Your most faithful friend, and
Sincere humble servant,
RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

No. IX.

Plantation-Office, July 2, 1766.

Dear Pinckney.

I am now to thank you for your favours of Feb. 21st, April the 28th, May 1st, 14th, and 21st ; these letters came all in the course of last week ; I will beg leave to answer them in their order. The first of them principally relates to Mr. Saxby, and my proposal of selling my patent of Provost Marshal.

You seem hurt by a preference, which you conceive I have shewn to Mr. Saxby in this business, by commissioning him to negotiate the disposal of my patent ; I must beg to assure you, that you have not the least shadow of reason to complain of any such preference ; nor to suspect that I entertain the smallest scruple of diffidence, either of your disposition to serve me, or of your ability so to do ; I have not given Mr. Saxby, or any other man living, any power or authority to transact this affair for me ; I dare not, and cannot, convey any such commission, while my patent is yet in the

disposal of the crown, which I have not yet solicited the release of; for, till the Assembly of South Carolina show a readiness to treat with me, I think it would be premature in me to make any motions on my side: all that I requested, (or, if you will, all that I commissioned) Mr. Saxby to do for me was, to sound the Assembly, to prepare the leading members for the proposal, and to be kind enough to use his interest, as far as it would go, in my behalf: what his interest may be I know not; it is possible, from what you tell me, that it may operate rather to my prejudice, than in my favour; but it was he who first started to me the idea of selling my patent; and you must not wonder, if I was glad to catch at every assistance and help towards so beneficial a proposal. This is my situation with Mr. Saxby; and sorry I am that his behaviour appears to you to be so supercilious, that I may be deprived of your joint and cordial co-operations, and he must lose the opportunity of making an agreeable friend. With respect to the mode of treating with the Assembly, I should conceive the proper channel would be for them to empower their agent to negotiate a bargain with me; the outlines of which might be, that they should vest as much money to my use, as would bring me in an income, equal to what the office pays me here in England. This is my object; the attainment of which is of the utmost importance to me; and which you will not be

surprised that I should try every method and employ every instrument to obtain. As the rest of this letter respects the difficulties and dilemmas which you are thrown into, by the Stamp Act, and as your latter letters acknowledge the repeal of it, I shall make no observations upon that subject, but hasten to assure you that I take a sincere part in your concern on Mrs. Pinckney's account; the relation you give me of her state of health, and your silence upon that subject in your subsequent letters, make me apprehend the worst. I beg I may be informed what the result of her situation has been.

Your second letter, dated April the 28th, further relates to the effects which the Stamp Act has upon your place, and the diminution it has occasioned in its revenue. I am much concerned at this account, and do equally with you regret the consequences which have attended it; your reasonings upon the office and duty of the Provost Marshal are, I dare say, perfectly right, but I am the most wretched lawyer in the world, and know nothing of the matter. The repeal answers this part of your letter, as it did the former, and I have only to add, that I hope now the Province has got into good-humour again, that the Assembly will be induced to take up their measure of erecting a public gaol; I need not urge you to use your best endeavours towards this work; and I hope my Lord Governor will not be averse to it.

Your next letter, of the 1st of May, relates to an alarm you are under concerning a motion for passing a law, "empowering magistrates to issue warrants for the recovery of all sums under £70. currency." This would, indeed, be prejudicial to my office; but I hope the inexpediency of the Act itself, the opposition which the gentlemen of the law will of course make to it, and, above all, the repeal of the Stamp Act will crush the thought in embryo, and we shall never see it on this side the water; should that be the case, you must think I would leave no stone unturned to get it repealed: you say nothing of it in your subsequent letters, so I conclude the motion is dropt.

Your letter of May the 14th, by the Hillsborough, gives an account of your having received news of the repeal; I make no doubt your joy on that occasion was as great as possible, but I hope not such as to betray you into any excesses, which may prejudice your health. If America, which has been so heated and inflamed with resentment against the contrivers and abettors of the Stamp Act, will but make a sober and temperate use of the advantages she reaps from the revocation of it, it may be happy for her, that the measure was taken, as far as it is a proof of the just attention which this country pays to the remonstrances of her colonies; for my own part, I

think that the extreme of joy is almost as formidable a fury, as that of anger, and sometimes attended with as bad consequences; I hope no instances of such will appear upon this event.

By the Argo, Captain Cutter, I receive your letter of May the 21st, together with a bill of lading for 540 Spanish dollars, of which £94. 8s. sterling, is to be put to the credit of Mr. Rush Tucker; I have not yet received the dollars; if I do, and sell them before I part from this, I will give you the state of our account current at the foot of this, if not, by the next conveyance. This goes by the Two Friends, Captain Ball.

July the 7th. Having not yet received the dollars, I am obliged to close this, and refer you to my next, which shall speedily follow this, for our account. In the mean time this letter will serve as an acknowledgement of their receipt.

Accept my good wishes, and

Believe me your's,

RICHARD CUMBERLAND,

No. X.

Plantation Office, January 1, 1767.

Dear Pinckney,

I am to thank you for various letters and papers relative to your conduct and the state of

your affairs. The part which you have taken, during the late unhappy situation of men and things, was such, I dare believe, as you was persuaded, both from reason and conscience, was right and proper for you to take: I have nothing to object to it, nor would now wish, (was I able so to do) to enter into a discussion of it; but I must fairly confess to you, I am entirely ignorant of the question; it is a point of law too hard for me to decide; you may be sure, in such a mixture and confusion of interests and sentiments, that different men will have different opinions upon the matter; but happily, both for you and for me, an Act of total oblivion is now passed, which buries all these matters in silence, and cancels, as I hope, all enmities and animosities that have so much agitated and enflamed the minds of men: I do not mean, by this, to say that your conduct stood in need of pardon; I rather believe that it needed only to be understood in order to be approved; but it is always better not to be engaged in controversy, though one should come off victorious from the engagement. With this view, I put your defence into the hands of my friend Mr. Maclean, Lord Shelburne's secretary, to be used by him if occasion should require; I am now informed from him, that the measure is, to recommend an entire oblivion of this and all other disputes; so that government here will pass over, and

take no cognizance of the matter, and of course, I suppose, recommend the same conduct to be observed on your side the water. I beg, therefore, you will be silent upon this head; let the matter sink; be perfectly at ease relating to yourself, and molest no one else in their opinions; do not use any hostile terms or expressions towards the Chief Justice, but act as if this dispute had never occurred; I shall think myself much obliged to you, if you will pursue this conduct, and, I dare say, you will find it best calculated for your own credit and repose. With respect to the young man at the head of affairs in your Province, I hope you will take no part pro or con; your remarks, I dare say, are just, and they shall never transpire; but I would wish you, if possible, to avoid being a party man, and, on the contrary, to conciliate all factions in a good opinion of you; such is the report and character I have ever received in your favour, and such, I dare say, it will continue to be. It was impossible for a person in your post, let his precaution be what it would, not to offend one set of men; you have been on the conquering side; contented with victory let your passions subside.

So much for the sermonizing part of my letter, let us now turn to more agreeable topics. I rejoice to hear of your welfare, and happy I am that I have an opportunity of congratulating you upon

the restoration of peace and concord amongst you; I have been a long while without writing to you, but while you was burning governors and stamp collectors in effigy, I did not chuse to meddle with you, nor knew I what to say to you; now I expect some pleasure and satisfaction in your correspondence. You tell me nothing of your family affairs; I have great reason to apprehend that you have lost Mrs. Pinckney, but you have never satisfied my enquiries upon that subject. Mrs. Cumberland and my little ones, (thank God) are in good health, and the good bishop, my mother, and sister are now in England, settled at Tyringham, which I have made over to them during their abode on this side the water; my father-always makes kind enquiries after you, and rejoices to hear of your welfare.

If I can procure a power of attorney, entitling you to sell my place of Clerk of the Peace, &c. for my life, or such term as may be fixed upon, (which I believe is preferable) I will send it by this conveyance; if not, it shall follow as soon as possible. Is there no news of a public gaol? nor any hopes of the Assembly purchasing my patent? I wish much to hear from you on this subject.

I am your's,

RICHARD CUMBERLAND,

Roger Pinckney, Esq.

No. XI.

Plantation Office, Jan. 30, 1767.

Dear Pinckney,

I just now receive your letter of the 28th of November, by the ship *Friendship*, and am made exceeding happy by the hopes you give me of putting my affairs in a train for success, respecting the surrender of my patent: I shall wait with impatience for the event of their report, and shall be glad to treat with their agent, whom I am somewhat acquainted with. Though I have lost some political support by Lord Halifax's retirement from business, I yet think I can summon strength enough to carry this point. I shall be particularly happy if you can get agreeably established in the office, and will make no terms in which your interest is not made a condition.

With respect to my place of Clerk of the Crown and Pleas, you know I have for a long time past touched nothing from it but my salary; if therefore you can sell it, together with the salary for the term of my life, I desire you will; and as I think you can do it by virtue of your power of attorney, I desire you will make a bargain for me, the best you can in the case, and let me know by the first opportunity.

Accept my best thanks,

And believe me your's,

RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

No. XII.

Queen Anne-Street, June 3, 1767.

Dear Pinckney,

Captain Ball being on the point of sailing, I cannot let him depart without writing you a line, though I have not yet received a word from you since your letter inclosing that bill which I sent you back protested. Many ships are now arrived, and I am still frustrated in my hopes of hearing from you, so that I am under no small concern, lest your health should have prevented you. The Little Carpenter, I am told, is soon expected, and I hope I shall not be disappointed when she arrives.

Mr. Garth, your provincial agent, has presented his memorial to Lord Shelburne, relative to the purchase of my patent. The result of this application is yet in suspense, though I am very much inclined to think that government will accede to our proposal; provided the legislature of South Carolina are content to pass a bill of the same nature with those which have been passed in other colonies, for establishing sheriffs, and will accompany that bill with a clause, suspending its execution till his Majesty's, (or the patentee's) consent is obtained. You shall have the earliest intelligence of our proceedings, and I beseech you to help my interests with your leading Assembly

men, towards disposing them to advance in their offers; ever considering that they are purchasing a perpetuity, and for the value which my place brings on the spot, not its rent to me as residing here in England.

I write in haste; but am ever,

My dear Sir,

Most sincerely and faithfully, yours,

RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

No. XIII.

Plantation Office, July 8, 1767.

Dear Pinckney,

I again trouble you with an inclosed dispatch for General Shirley, of which I entreat your particular care. I am this morning favoured with your letter of the 10th of May, inclosing the drafts of agreement; I have had scarce time to run my eye over the contents of your letter, being much hurried when I read it, much less have I had time to consider the purport and requisition of it, but I always feel myself heartily disposed to do every thing that, in reason and justice, I possibly can for your interest and benefit. The business of the sheriffs is not yet brought to a conclusion, but from circumstances I have no manner of doubt that Government will consent to their establishment, and gladly consent, as it is an institution

more approved of than that of a Provost Marshal; upon various very substantial reasons. Nothing therefore but price can part us, and I think the Assembly will not be their own enemies so much as to differ with me upon a small sum; and my demands I am sure will not be out of reason.

I thankfully received your turtle safe and sound, and a marvellous fine one it was; we celebrated the founder of our feast with great festivity, and nothing could be more acceptable than your favour was. I thanked you for it by the first opportunity: and am glad to do it again by this occasion; as well as to tell you how much I think myself beholden to you for your further designs.

I am much disappointed at the state of your affairs in Charlestown, neither money nor bills to be had. I am glad you got the bad bill for 100*l*. in again. Gold would be pretty near as good as dollars, but either gold, silver, or good paper, would be very acceptable.

I am truly concerned to hear of Mrs. Pinckney's deplorable state of health. How you must suffer on this occasion! so dreadful a disorder, and so cureless an one; surely it would be adviseable to send her home. Command my services on this business, for indeed I feel for you and her most cordially.

My wife and little ones are all well, and she desires to be kindly remembered to you; the good

bishop and family are also in perfect health ; he is still in England, but is on the point of setting out on his return to Ireland.

Accept my constant good wishes, and ever believe me,

Dear Sir,

Your's most faithfully,

RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

No. XIV.

Plantation Office, July 29, 1767.

Dear Pinckney,

I beg you will deliver the inclosed letter, together with my best respects, to Lord Charles ; I need not tell you that it refers to the subject of the patent.

I was in some doubt whether I should not write to the Committee upon the same subject, but as it occurs to me that their agent, Mr. Garth, may not take the thing well, if I communicate with his constituents immediately, I shall entreat of you to signify to them the following particulars :

“ Mr. Garth having, with my concurrence, presented a Memorial to Lord Shelburne, Secretary of State, proposing the establishment of County Sheriffs, in lieu of a Provost Marshal, his lordship has favourably received the said Petition, and referred it to the consideration of this Board.

“ The Report, which has been made in consequence thereof, recommends it to his lordship to advise his Majesty to instruct his Governor of South Carolina to give his assent to an Act of Assembly for instituting County Sheriffs in lieu of a Provost Marshall, provided proper compensation be made to the present patentee, and provided a clause be inserted therein, suspending its execution till his Majesty’s pleasure thereupon shall be known.

“ This Report having been accordingly made, in a conference I had yesterday with Lord Shelburne upon this subject, his lordship was so good to promise that he would forward the business in council, and cause a very speedy order to be issued to this Board for preparing an additional instruction to the Government, according to the above purport and effect.”

The business, therefore, being in such forwardness, and the security that we may be considered to be in as to the Crown’s assenting to the patent’s being vacated, I have thought it a proper season for declaring to Mr. Garth what my terms definitively are: five thousand pounds sterling is the sum I have demanded, and, all things weighed and considered, I am persuaded that my demand is just and reasonable.

If they assent to this proposal, and will empower Mr. Garth to conclude with me upon these conditions, I will then cause the additional in-

struction to be transmitted agreeably to the order in Council ; but, if they will not close upon this bargain, it will be of no use to transmit the instruction while our negotiation remains open.

I beg of you to signify to the Committee of Correspondence, what I have now written, and if they urge an argument which I have heard suggested, I beg you will answer it on my part. The argument I mean is this, viz. that having obtained this sanction to their proposal for abolishing the office of Provost Marshal, they have only to wait the event of my death, and then it will be adjusted without any expence.

To this I answer, that the Assembly being an immortal body, may no doubt wait the determination of my life ; but that it will by no means follow that this event is to put them in possession of their wishes. Different ministers may adopt different measures ; a strict attention to prerogative, or a mere natural regard to their own patronage, may effect a change of sentiment with respect to the matter in question. Supposing that the office was vacant, it is not likely that a minister would forego the disposal of it merely to save the expences of the Province of South Carolina ; when, after having bestowed it as he thought fit, it would then be favour enough to consent to the disposal of it, by sale, to them.

These, I think, are natural conclusions, and

such as it is not likely the Assembly will trust to; however I must, besides, observe, that it would be rather ungenerous to urge that prospect of success, which is entirely owing to my concurrence and solicitation, as an argument for reducing me in my terms.

I beg, therefore, you will oppose any argument of this sort, with reasoning of the nature above-mentioned, or such better as your own judgment suggests. I rely absolutely upon you in this matter, and have no doubt of your friendship and assistance; in return for which you may depend upon every attention to your interest that is in my power to give.

I wish much to hear what you have done relative to my other employment of Clerk of the Peace, &c. I should be glad if you could dispose of it for my life, to any reasonable advantage; and I conceive you are sufficiently empowered for that purpose.

I have as yet received no remittances whatever, since the protested bill; I can assure you they would be very acceptable, and though I am satisfied you do all in your power to forward them to me, yet I must confess that I am not a little distressed for want of them. Gold would be very acceptable in failure of dollars.

I thank you for the trouble you have taken in procuring me another turtle. I have heard

nothing of it at present, but shall be very thankful to you for it, whenever it arrives.

I am, with great esteem,

Dear Sir,

Most faithfully your's,

RICHARD CUMBERLAND,

Mr. Pinckney.

Pray deliver the enclosed letter to Mr. George Saxby and young Guerard; I have forgot his Christian name, so I must desire you to fill it up.

I think it may be useful to transmit to you a copy of the Report to Lord Shelburne, though I make no doubt Mr. Garth will send it to his constituents; however you will have it first, and may communicate it with some advantage to me.

If you think the Committee would like to hear from me immediately, pray inform me, and I will write to them.

R. C.

[The three following Letters were enclosed in the preceding one.]

No. XV.

Plantation Office, July 29, 1767.

Dear Sir,

Allow me to enquire after your welfare by this conveyance, and to assure you of the grateful

remembrance I preserve of the politeness and favours I have received both from your father and yourself.

I am now in treaty with the Assembly of your Province, through the intervention of their agent, Mr. Garth, for the surrender of my patent of Provost Marshal. The situation to which I have now brought that affair, gives me an almost certain prospect of success, if they do but approve the terms and conditions which I have proposed: I persuade myself that these terms are just and honest, and in no respect exorbitant, at least if I thought so I would not propose them; my demand, Sir, is five thousand pounds sterling. This Board has made a Report favourable to the proposal, and it only remains now for the King in Council to direct an instruction to be prepared for his Governor, for assenting to a bill, instituting County Sheriffs in lieu of a Provost Marshal. As soon as Mr. Garth and I have agreed upon terms, I will cause this instruction to be transmitted, and till then it will be better on all accounts to keep it suspended.

As I know you are capable both of private as well as public friendship, and as I flatter myself you would wish well to my interests when they do not clash with those of the Province, I think I may hope for your services in the present case, where, undoubtedly, the public convenience and advantage is as much concerned as mine is. Allow

me, therefore, to entreat your favour and assistance towards inducing such of your friends as are concerned in this negociation, to close with me upon the present proposals I have made, and from which I shall not depart.

Accept my constant good wishes for your welfare and prosperity, and believe me,

Dear Sir,

Your most obedient
And faithful humble Servant,
RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

— Guerard, Esq.

No. XVI.

(Duplicate.)

Plantation Office, July, 29, 1767.

Dear Sir,

As I owe the original suggestion to you, I have all along used the freedom of making you acquainted with the steps I have taken relative to the disposal of my patent of Provost Marshal.

The situation in which that matter now stands, ensures a favourable and speedy issue to the business, provided the Assembly think fit to accede to my terms. I ask no more than five thousand pounds sterling, and I flatter myself that, when all things are considered, they will not be thought hard or unreasonable.

The Report which the Lords of Trade have made in favour of this measure, to his Majesty, and the disposition that the present Secretary of State is in to complete the exchange, leave me no room to doubt the success of this affair. Lord Shelburne has assured me, that an Order of Council shall speedily be sent for preparing an instruction to the Governor, to pass an act to this effect, but this instruction I shall detain here in England till Mr. Garth and I are agreed.

If you think my demands just and reasonable, as I persuade myself you will, from what passed between us before your departure, I hope and trust you will contribute all in your power to forward an accommodation, in doing which you will no doubt have the satisfaction of serving the Province, which cannot fail of receiving great use and benefit from the institution of County Sheriffs in lieu of that of Provost Marshal.

An opportunity so favourable as the present may not happen again for a long term of years. I think, therefore, that the Assembly will not object to the proposal I have made, when they consider it maturely and fully.

I have the honour to be, with great esteem and respect,

Dear Sir,

Your most obedient and faithful humble Servant,

RICHARD CUMBERLAND,

To the Hon. George Saxby.

No. XVII.

Copy of a Report from the Lords of Trade to the Earl of Shelburne, one of his Majesty's Secretaries of State.

My Lord,

Agreeably to your lordship's letter of the 15th instant, we have taken into our consideration the Memorial of Mr. Garth, Agent for South Carolina, petitioning, that County Sheriffs may be appointed in that Province in lieu of a Provost Marshal, on terms mentioned, and for reasons set forth in the said Memorial; whereupon we beg leave to inform your lordship, that, in the present circumstances of the said Province of South Carolina, where cultivation and inhabitancy have arrived to a considerable state of improvement, and where settlements are extended to a great distance from the seat of Government, and established in great numbers, we are clearly of opinion, that a division of the said Province into counties, with an establishment of Sheriffs for the same, in lieu of a Provost Marshal, will be not only of public use and convenience to his Majesty's subjects there, as conducing to the more speedy and due administration of civil and criminal justice, but an institution also more correspondent to the usage and constitution of this kingdom. And we are confirmed in this opinion as we find it agree-

able to that of our predecessors in office, stated in their Report to the Lords of the Council, dated the 2d of September, 1765, wherein, amidst various other proposals relative to a general system of judicature for the colony of Quebec, they recommend the establishment of County Sheriffs. We do not hesitate, therefore, to recommend it to your lordship to advise his Majesty to instruct his Governor of South Carolina, to give his assent to an Act of Assembly for instituting County Sheriffs in lieu of a Provost Marshal (provided proper compensation be made to the present Patentee for his interest in the said office), in like form and manner as has been done in other Colonies, in which case it will be the duty of his Majesty's Governor to take care that a clause be inserted in the said Act of Assembly, suspending its operation, till his Majesty's pleasure thereupon shall be known.

We are,

My Lord,

Your lordship's most obedient,

And most humble Servants,

CLARE,

WILLIAM FITZHERBERT,

THOMAS ROBINSON.

Whitehall, July 22, 1767.

(A true Copy. R. C.)

No. XVIII.

Queen Anne Street, October 17, 1767.

My dear Sir,

I wrote a few lines to you by a young man who has served me in the capacity of coachman for two years, and has now hired himself to Mr. Gibbs, of your Province. I have promised the man that, if he behaves well, you will, if occasion requires, protect him: and allow him to lodge in your hands any little matter he may have the good fortune to save. I am not in the least acquainted with Mr. Gibbs, so that I look upon it as possible that he may need your countenance and assistance. He has stipulated to serve him for three years, at the rate of 40*l.* sterling per annum.

I have wrote fully to you on the subject of my treaty with Mr. Garth, relative to my patent. The Secretary of State has wrote to Lord Charles, empowering him to give his assent to an Act for that purpose, provided it is passed with a suspending clause, and that compensation is made to me. My terms are fixed at 5000*l.* sterling, and I have the satisfaction to find that they are thought here to be very reasonable.

I have been favoured by you with a bill from Lord Charles of 50*l.* with 340 dollars by the

same conveyance, and since that with 600 dollars, the amount of which is as follows :

	£.	s.	d.
<i>Aug.</i> 20.—By Lord Charles Montagu's			
draft - - - - -	50	0	0
By 340 dollars - - - - -	78	6	1
<i>Sept.</i> 14.—By 600 ditto - - - - -	138	6	0
	266	12	1

A thousand thanks to you for a turtle. It is now late at night, and the servant waiting for this scrawl. The agreement was but made this morning with Mr. Gibbs, and early to-morrow he sets off for Gravesend, otherwise I would have thought of something that would have been agreeable to you. I sincerely wish to hear a better account of Mrs. Pinckney. Mrs. Cumberland joins me in good wishes to you and your's; the Bishop and family are well in Ireland.

I am, dear Pinckney,

Most faithfully your's,

RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

No. XIX.

August 15, 1768.

Dear Pinckney,

I put off writing to you till I could inform you of the fate of the Act for the establishment of courts, &c. which, on account of the importance

of it, and delicacy to my interest, has been some time under examination of the Lords of Trade. Sir Matthew Lambe, one of his Majesty's Counsel, to whom the Board refers all Plantation Acts, had objected to some clauses in the Bill; particularly to the summary jurisdiction of the judges in their Circuit Courts, which he stated as an extent greater than obtained in any other Colony, and for less than which acts had been heretofore repealed. He observed, that the salary to the Attorney-General and the Clerk of the Pleas was granted to them personally, while in office, and not annexed to the offices. But the main question was the clause for granting salaries to the judges, whenever his Majesty should change the present form of their commissions, and establish them during *good behaviour*; against this clause the chief force of his objection was directed, and it was submitted by him whether it would not be derogatory to the King's dignity to pass an Act with such a clause in it. This was Sir Matthew Lambe's Report to us, upon the Act in question. In answer to these objections various arguments were used, both by your humble servant, and particularly Mr. Garth, who, at a solemn hearing of the Board, and on a day singly set apart for this business, spoke for two hours to the question, with great ability and spirit. The sense of the Board upon the event was, that the objections on the one part, and the advantages of the Act on the

other, should be fairly stated, and the matter left to the decision of the King and Council. The Lords were of opinion, that no objection laid against the summary jurisdictions being extended to 20*l.* sterling; particularly as both, or either, of the parties might resort to the ordinary forms of common law, or equity, if they thought fit; a law of the same sort obtains in Ireland, and the convenience that would result from it, was thought a full balance for the uncommon extent of it. The Attorney-General's clause was stated as exceptionable in a degree, but not fatal against a bill productive of such general benefit. It had been urged by Mr. Garth, that these officers (*viz.* the Attorney-General and Clerk of the Pleas) would be put to great extra trouble in carrying the measures of this Act into operation, and therefore these appointments were given them as a personal compensation for that trouble, and this was done by salary rather than by grant at once, as it was possible those officers might quit their employs before the whole business was conducted to an issue, and they entitled to their full reward.

As to the clause for altering the judges commissions, that was not got over with such ease. A particular instruction in the year 1760 had been circulated to all the continental governors, forbidding them to give their assent to any Act of Assembly for making alteration in the Commissions of the Judges, and this was done on

account of some steps of that nature taken by New York ; this particular instruction is since incorporated into the general body of instructions given to all governors, and makes the 42d article of Lord Charles Montagu's. In the face of such an article, it is not possible for government to pass over this regulation, which should have come by way of separate application, and not been tacked to an Act of this high importance. To make the judges removable only by writ of *scire facias* in the Provinces, without subjecting them to parliamentary jurisdiction, will, I conceive, never be adopted by this country. Upon the whole, therefore, I conclude that the council will repeal the Act on account of this clause. The advantages of the general regulation will be stated in the report of the Lords of Trade, in a very full and explicit manner, and as I think Mr. Garth will speedily transmit a copy of that report, to his constituents, and I hope the temper and moderation of government will appear so conspicuous throughout the agitation of this question, that the Assembly will find no difficulty in passing it without this exceptionable clause.

I have now only to request the favour of you to continue your kind services to me in this affair, in the same disinterested manner you have hitherto proceeded ; to move every friend you have in government, not to let a measure of such public convenience fall to the ground from a false punc-

tilio, when this country is disposed to grant them every indulgence in the general affair that can be wished for, and the crown has consented to abrogate its patent. I should hope your Assembly will see it in this light, and let it be one of the first acts of their session, to re-enact this useful law in a manner less objectionable, in case it should be repealed. With respect to my office of Clerk of the Crown and Peace, I should hope you will be able to part from it to advantage for the term of my life; you have had powers for that purpose; which, I believe, are sufficient, and, I dare say, you will take the first good opportunity of doing it.

I inclose a little abstract of our account current, which I believe you will find right. You state Joliffe's bill at £65. in your's of March 6th.; I have entered it at £60. only, but as I have not my banker's book, I cannot correct it now, but will in my next. Farewel,

Believe me most faithfully

And obediently your's,

RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

No. XX.

Tyringham, Oct. 12, 1768.

Dear Sir,

I am here partaking of a few holidays, and am just now informed by my friend Mr. Pownall,

that the council have advised his Majesty to disallow the Act for the abolition of the Provost Marshal's office. The objections which have occasioned this repeal you are acquainted with, by a former letter from me, and, indeed, in great part from your own suggestions; I shall not, therefore, repeat them; the clause concerning the judge's commissions, had the most weight against it. At the same time that his Majesty will signify his royal disallowance, he will likewise instruct his governor to recommend the repassing this Act, for the above general purposes, free from those objections; and as all has been conducted with tenderness and respect towards the Province and its legislature, I cannot but sanguinely hope and expect the return of the Bill in an unexceptionable shape. Your good offices will, I dare say, be exerted on this occasion; and as the Secretary of State stops the sailing of the packet singly for this purpose, of instructing the governor relative to the return of this Bill, I should hope the Assembly will take it up in their first meeting, and as there is so little to be done to it, it may very well be got through before Christmas. Mr. Garth, their agent, is, I believe, at the Devizes; if so, perhaps he cannot write officially by this packet, nor send over a copy of the Board's representation, which you will see was very favourable and indulgent. In that case, I must entreat of you to

converse with the Speaker and leading men of the Assembly, and to soften their minds towards the measure, by assuring them, (which you truly may) that the repeal of this Act has not been hastily or captiously decided on, but upon full and temperate deliberations, and principally upon the motives of their proposal for altering the judge's commissions, which certainly should not have been made a clause in an Act, and from which the governor was, by express instructions, particularly restricted.

I write in the greatest haste, hoping that this letter may find a conveyance, together with the Secretary of State's dispatches, for which purpose I inclose it to Mr. Pownall; but I think I need use but few words to induce you to use your best offices, and as to the manner how, you are doubtless a far better judge than I can pretend to be.

I will write more fully to you by the next conveyance of a merchant ship, and in the meantime, (as always) am your very affectionate friend, and

Obliged humble servant,

RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

The bishop and family are expected here, from Dublin, every day. Mrs. Cum. sends compliments, she and the little ones are all well.

No. XXI,

Queen Anne-Street, Oct. 27, 1769.

Dear Pinckney,

By the paquet, which was detained in order to convey the Secretary of State's dispatches to the governor, touching the repeal of the Act for instituting sheriffs, &c. you was troubled with a letter from me. The reasons upon which that Act was repealed, and the conditions on which the crown will give its assent to another for the same general purposes, are fully explained to the governor, and the copy of this Board's report on the law is likewise annexed to the letter, which conveys those reasons. What will be now the fate of this important measure remains with time to discover: the spirit of *regulation* that obtains, so vehemently, in your back settlements, the total subversion of the regular course of administering justice by the Provost Marshal, and the general outcry that obtains throughout the interior of your country for county courts and the establishment of sheriffs, will, surely, induce your legislature to repass the Act, upon such terms and conditions as the crown has thought fit to prescribe.

There is one stipulation, however, which may in some degree check the progress of this Act, and, perhaps, endanger its safety; that is, the condition that his Majesty's governor shall not be

bound to nominate one of the three persons returned by the judges. People disinclined to the measure, may possibly make this a plausible handle for opposing it, but surely the crown, which has now the absolute nomination of the Provost Marshal, may retain to itself the power of naming a pocket sheriff through the means of its governor, when the king voluntarily consents to abolish his patent. The practice in England justifies the crown in this exertion of its prerogative, and I cannot think the Province will be put upon worse ground, by having a sheriff appointed *de novo* by the sole authority of the king's governor, than they would by having one of his election out of three recommended by the judges; for these judges, you know, are as much in the power of the crown, as the governor is, and so they seem likely to remain. Upon the whole, what can be more just and equitable than for the crown to make its own stipulations, when it is conferring a favour? The whole question is, whether the institution of sheriffs, upon such reasonable terms, is, or is not, more advantageous to South Carolina than the present establishment of a Provost Marshall; if they think so, they will re-enact their law; if they do not, nothing that you and I can say will signify a straw.

I read with much concern, in our papers, of the death of Mrs. Pinckney; the long state of ill health she has laboured under, must have injured

you to the loss you have endured ; I have now only to hope that, when your grief has subsided, you will look out for yourself a good rich planter, and make up your fortune with her assistance for life.

Pray write to me frequently and fully ; I need not tell you that a few dollars will be acceptable.

I am, my dear Pinckney, .

Most faithfully your's

RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

I much wish to hear what you have done with my office of Clerk of, &c. &c. I beg your furtherance of the inclosed letter to Colonel Shirley.

No. XXII.

Queen Anne-Street, March 15, 1769.

Dear Pinckney,

I am to thank you for the favour of both your obliging letters, the last of which (dated Jan. the 27th) came to hand this very day. It gives me so much pleasure, and of so sincere a sort, that I cannot withstand the satisfaction of writing directly in answer to it ; the prospect you set before me, of the happy and advantageous alliance you are now upon the point of forming, has given me inconceivable delight ; I have always felt myself in a manner, responsible for your

good or ill fortune, and this event has relieved me from all anxiety on your account. Mr. William Strong happening to be in town, and bound to Peterborough to-morrow, I seized the occasion of communicating the good tidings to your friends in that place, which, for what I know, may be new intelligence to them. The Bishop of Clonfert, with whom I dined this day, joins with us all in congratulating you on your approaching good fortune; he charges me to assure you of his constant regard for you, and his wishes in your behalf. I beg you will make my respects, and those of Mrs. Cumberland, to your lady, and assure her, that we shall remember the day, and wear wedding favours upon the occasion. I need not assure you how happy we shall be to see you in England next spring, and shall study to make London as agreeable to Mrs. Pinckney, as it will be in our power; I hope nothing will prevent your design taking place, and I have no doubt I shall find your fair choice as amiable, and as full of accomplishments, as you think her.

I esteem myself highly beholden to you, for your disinterested and friendly support of my interests in the negociation for disposing of my patent. That fatal and unfortunate measure for dissolving the Assembly has thrown every thing back; what it arose from is past my comprehension; I have yet to hope that every thing will turn out well at last; I think your Assembly will be called together

upon amicable terms, and I persuade myself they will meet with friendly dispositions; nothing, I believe, can be less hostile than the sentiments of government towards them, and I think, amongst other marks of their regard to the requisitions of the mother country, and the dictates of their own interest, this Act, (as recommended by the crown) will take place; it is surely a gracious tender on the part of his Majesty, and the pressing necessity of your internal police makes it highly expedient for the welfare of the Province. I wish you may take your seat in the Assembly, and, I dare say, your voice and support will greatly forward this salutary proposal.

I am preparing, (and I hope to send you by this conveyance) a prolongation to your lease; in which, for the sake of accommodating myself to the convenience of the Province, I have taken the liberty of making it a condition in the said lease, that, upon six months notice, I may be released from the engagement. I am sure your candour will see the necessity of this measure, and look upon it in the right light. With respect to security, I refer myself to your honour; I will not apply to any third person to transact that business for me, but I rely, with confidence, that you will send me over such an obligation as shall be satisfactory and sufficient.

I am sorry you cannot dispose of my other office to advantage, for, in the state it is, it lies quite

profitless and fallow : by the time you come to England, you will, I dare say, conclude upon something beneficial.

Never entertain a moment's thought that I have suffered myself to doubt of your friendship, punctuality, or integrity ; so many proofs as you have given me in each respect, must have put that matter long since out of doubt. I am perfectly satisfied with your conduct in every particular, and have never heard a report that has not been to your honour. I am now to acknowledge the receipt of £150. sterling, by bill of exchange, which I have no doubt will be duly honoured, and of which, upon that presumption, I now discharge you. The money resulting from the legacy you mention, I have not as yet heard of ; it is most probable a few days will inform me of it, and I will then give you credit to the amount by the first opportunity, and, at the same time, transmit the abstract of our whole account. I thank you, likewise, for the promise you make me, of remitting to me upon sale of your rice ; it is a favour more than I can expect, to be paid in advance, but I think myself obliged to you for the intention, and will take care to make myself properly responsible when such an event takes place.

I think I have little to add on this occasion, more than to re-assure you of the cordial participation I feel in your approaching happiness, and to make an offer of my best services, in case you

have any commissions to execute here in England. In return for your good news, I hope soon to send you tidings of my promotion to considerable advantage in my present occupation.

I am, dear Sir,

Your most faithful servant,

And sincere friend,

RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

No. XXIII.

Queen Anne-Street, May 1, 1770.

Dear Pinckney,

I am to acknowledge your favours by the London, Alexander Curling, and the Beaufair, Daniel Curling, by the former of which, I had your order for the produce of 98 barrels of rice, and by the latter (which I have very lately received) have your order for the produce of 19 barrels of ditto. The amount of the first you will find specified in a little account inclosed, signed by Geo. Curling. Since the receipt of the second, I have not seen Geo. Curling, so can say nothing to that at present; you have, likewise, inclosed an account of debtor and creditor, continued since the conclusion of the year 1765, when I stood indebted to you in the balance of £4. 11s. 9d. and carried down to the day of my

vacating the Provost Marshal's office. I receive your congratulations on that agreeable event, with the utmost thankfulness, for all your kind and friendly offices; but as I have already conveyed my thanks to you on that subject, I won't punish your delicacy by repeating them too often. I now look to you for some assistance in the case of my remaining office of Clerk, &c. &c. which I think may be advantageously disposed of, upon the plan that I pointed out in my last letter. The Province must feel the use of taking these offices into their own management, and the appointment of clerks for the circuits cannot but be an object to the legislature, in the constitution of their courts; without they agree with me for my life in those offices, it cannot be expected I can appoint and furnish separate deputies for the respective circuits, when one only deputy cannot, or will not, afford to pay me any acknowledgement for the whole amount of the fees.

I sincerely congratulate you and Mrs. Pinckney on your birth of a son, and hope, upon her recovery, you will think of a trip to England; where Mrs. Cum. and I shall be happy to see you. Accept our joint compliments, and believe me,

Dear Pinckney,

Most faithfully yours,

RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

No. XXIV.

Queen Anne-Street, June 11, 1770.

Dear Pinckney,

What is become of you, and how has this sleep fallen upon our correspondence; that I have not seen your hand writing this age. I was not without hopes that the spring would have brought you over to England, and I can scarce now persuade myself but that you are on the water with your fair wife at your side, looking out for English land. If it should not be so, and that this meets you at Charlestown, you well know I have yet some interests under your care, which I am anxious to bring to some good conclusion; I mean the sale of my post of clerk, &c. which, with the salary payable by the king's receiver, might, I should think, in the present circumstances of the colony, be sold to considerable profit, for I do not know how their county courts can well exist without deputies in my offices, and I am sure I have neither means nor meaning to appoint any such. I have given you regular accounts of our balance, and of the proceeds of your rice, which I should fear did not entirely meet your expectations; I shall hope to hear from you very shortly, or which will be much better to see you.—Accept my sincere wishes for yourself, and present them to your lady, and believe me,

Dear Pinckney,

Most faithfully your's,

RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

No. XXV.

Queen Anne-Street, Nov. 13, 1770.

Dear Pinckney,

I have your favour of the 6th of July and with it a draft for sixty pounds sterling, which was duly paid, and for which I have given you credit. I had before acknowledged the receipt of the amount of the twenty-nine barrels of rice, the proceeds of which I fear have disappointed your expectations, though I am totally ignorant of those matters. I am sorry that unhappy step in your Assembly, by making a useless and irregular present to the Society, who call themselves the supporters of the Bill of Rights, has kept you out of so large a sum due to you. It has been your lot to fall into troublesome and uncertain times; but by great good providence and prudent conduct I hope and trust you have weathered the storm, and I shall be heartily glad to hear that you are likely to bring your vessel to anchor in your own country once for life. I was not without hopes of seeing you and your lady this year, as you intimated such a design to me. I make no doubt you have staid upon good reasons, and I hope it will prove to good purpose. I depend upon your kind attention to me in the disposal of my place of Clerk of the Crown, &c. and give you full powers to do it in your own way; perhaps a term of years.

would be preferable to a lease for my life, as revolutions may rise to give it a future value, greater than it now has. The salary you know is 25*l*. sterling per annum, and cannot alter; the value of that, therefore, is determinate, and may easily be rated in a bargain for the whole. I sent the cheeses, which I hope arrived safe, and met your approbation.

Since my return out of Ireland, where I have lately been on a visit to the good bishop, I have had the misfortune to lose my sister Hughes, who died in childbed of her eighth child, and left seven living behind her. This has been a hard blow to the good people in Ireland, but my last accounts represent them better than I could expect. My younger, and now only sister, has lately married in Ireland, to Mr. Alcock, a young gentleman of good family, fortune, and preferment; but even this event presents us with little present prospect of happiness to balance against the above misfortune, as the health of this gentleman seems to be of the most precarious sort, arising from a violent nervous affection on his spirits, to which people in these climates become more and more subject.

Parliament met yesterday. You will see the King's speech, and will not be able to draw any positive conclusion from it relative to the events of peace or war. The messenger who is expected to bring the definitive answer from the Court of Spain is not yet returned.

Pray let me hear from you soon, and as often as your leisure and convenience allows, for your letters are great comforts to me, and to hear of your domestic happiness and prosperity, most agreeable intelligence.

My wife and children are all, thank God, in perfect health, and join in compliments and good wishes to you, your lady, and child.

I am, dear Pinckney,

Most faithfully yours,

RICHARD CUMBERLAND.

<i>Account Current.</i>	<i>£.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
Debt upon balance of last year - -	238	9	11
Rent from June 8, to Nov. 29, - -	95	1	10
Salary from Lady Day to ditto, at 40 <i>l</i> . -	26	0	0
Salary of Clerk's place to Lady Day, 1770 -	25	0	0
Bill of Exchange to Collier - - -	12	8	6

396 15 3

April 6th, Received for rice - - -	180	19	0
June 22d, Received for ditto - - -	38	10	1
Sept. 1st. Bill of Exchange - - -	60	0	0

279 9 1

Due on balance 117 6 2

£.396 15 3

XXVI.

Tetworth, near Biggleswade, July 28, 1775.

Dear Sir,

Your letter of the 10th of May, after a silence of so long standing, gave me much satisfaction, and I should have received much more from it, if your zeal for America and its cause had allowed you room and disposition to have informed me of yourself and your affairs. You are silent as to your family, and all that concerns a friend and well-wisher to hear; but you are very particular and diffusive in your description of the action at Concord, and the inhumanity of your late countrymen, the English troops. One enquiry, however, I had at heart, which by implication your letter answers, and that is, when your friends in England may expect your return; this I can plainly see will not be till Mr. Hancock and Mr. Adams take lodgings at St. James's, for you are as true an American as ever I met with, so thoroughly have you assimilated yourself to the soil and sentiments to which you have been transplanted. I make no reply to the list of savage enormities, the rapine, plunder, and barbarous indignities to the mangled bodies of the dead, with which your information loads the military, which, in general, is composed of the most humane, and always of the most brave amongst your countrymen

and mine ; time must have cleared up the truth to you in this particular, even through the medium of New England misrepresentation ; and you will now have another account to lament over of the action on the 17th of June, in which the same tale of horror will be repeated, and the same *Te Deums* sung by the victorious Bostonians ; but I still repeat to you, that time will clear your error and alter your sentiments. To give you my ideas, wide as they stand off from your own, would be quite useless and laborious to us both. I deplore the situation of America in every vein of my heart ; I think the measures which have inflamed and misled them, have not originated with themselves ; they have conceived the idea of disobedience and disorder in all its fatal extent, from the conduct of certain politicians in the heart of this realm ; but those politicians have been opposers, and not abettors of administration ; I pity the deluded throng, who rouse at the call of liberty, (though it is like the shepherd's-boy in the fable, who cried wolf when there was no wolf), but I have also, and you, dear Sir, it is presumed once had, some bowels of consideration for those murderers (as you call them) *who are sparing neither sex, age, or condition, tearing down, burning, and destroying every thing in their way, and with rapine and plunder of the poor inhabitants, enriching themselves.* And is it possible you can lend a serious ear to this nonsensical rhapsody, excusable

in no one but a New England field preacher; and can you seriously transcribe so ridiculous a calumny, and send it to me as authentic news? Have not you known the temper and nature of your own brave countrymen in times past?—Have you never lived with English officers, or recollected the transactions of the late war in all its branches? When they conquered the empire of America for the Americans, did they exhibit any instances of this blood-thirsty disposition, which seems copied from a Grub-street paper of a *horrid, bloody, and inhuman murder*? Our natural enemies never had it to accuse us of what our natural friends now charge us; and that through the medium, not of an American, but of an English gentleman, who has left his country not many years past, and in that time, to my knowledge, been spectator of many very disorderly proceedings and insurrections in which there was no English soldier to be found to bear the blame; I believe when you went your progress into the interior of South Carolina, you would not have been sorry to have had a file of British grenadiers in your suite.

I have troubled you and myself much too long upon this painful subject; I have no desire to wean your partiality from the place you are in, and the people you are with. It is in some respects a most convenient and happy partiality; and it is a pity to awaken reason and judgment

when they are buried in so sweet and innocent a slumber.

I have been at Peterborough lately, where I saw some late friends of yours, some bloody Englishmen, who I suppose would roast and eat you for an American, if you was to come amongst them again. This you may at least expect, that there is plenty of tar and feathers provided for you, but I am apt to think they would rather give you the fowl than its feathers.

I do not shew your letter to Mrs. Cum. or any of your old friends; she would not thank you for your character of the *king's troops*, having lately lost the bravest and the best of brothers, (but joy be for the Americans!) he was an inhuman Englishman, and one of the *king's troops*. I have never worn a cockade, so I may conclude myself, as usual,

Dear Sir,

Your most faithful friend,

And obedient Servant,

RICHARD CUMBERLAND,

INDEX.

A.

- ADDISON**, remarks on Tickell's elegy on his death, 86, 87.
- Adultery*, iniquitous proceedings of those who publish trials for, 449.
- Affectation*, lines upon, by Cumberland, notice of, 581.
- Ancestors of Cumberland*, *See* Bentley and Cumberland.
- Anecdotes of Spanish Painters*, by Cumberland, notice of, 397.
- Anecdotes, remarkable*, of the thief who stole Dr. Bentley's plate, 19. Of Dr Bentley, not generally known, 23. Of Dr. Thompson, Dodington's body-physician, 111, 112. Of Dr. Goldsmith, 263—269. Of Count Kaunitz, 361. Of Lord Sackville, 484—489. Of Cumberland and a book-seller, 586.
- Anonymous Criticism*, remarks on its abuses, 569—573.
- Armageddon*, a poem by Mr. Townsend, absurd examination of, by Cumberland, 574, 575.
- Armourer*, a comic opera, by Cumberland, *See* Wat Tyler.
- Arundel*, a novel by Cumberland, remarks on, 493—504. Holds a distinguished place among his writings, 493. Characters in, 494—497, 499—501. Parts of this work indelicate, if not indecent, 503. Justification of, by Cumberland, *ib*.
- Ashby, Edmund*, receives Cumberland to board with him in Peter Street, Westminster, 54.
- Atterbury, Bishop*, anecdote of, 38.

B.

- Badcock, William, Esq.* marries Cumberland's second daughter, Sophia, 396. Not well spoken of by Cumberland, *ib*.
- Banishment of Cicero*, a tragedy by Cumberland, 124. Remarks on, 124, 125. Complimentary letter from Bishop Warburton on, 125, 126. Extracts from, 127, 128. Presented to Garrick by Lord Halifax, 129. Rejected by him, 129.
- Barnes, Joshua*, Dr. Bentley's opinion of, 37.
- Battle of Hastings*, remarks on Cumberland's tragedy of, 322—334. Imitations of Shakspeare in, 325—328.

Beckford, Mr. Alderman, character of, 118.

Bentinck, Lord Edward, son to the late Duke of Portland, marries Cumberland's eldest daughter, Elizabeth, 596.

Bentley, Dr. Richard, an illustrious ancestor of Cumberland, 11. His vast erudition, arrogance, and controversial ability, *ib.* His skill in verbal criticism consigned to contempt, by Pope, *ib.* His sagacity as a critic, *ib.* Preposterous emendations of Milton, *ib.* Sublime discoveries in science, *ib.* His domestic character placed in an amiable light, 12. His hat of formidable dimensions, 13. The promoter of the childish sports of Cumberland and his sister, 14. His gentle rebuke for making a noise over his library, 16. Observation upon the argument of Cumberland, that he never slept, 17. Bishop Lowth's appellation of him, *ib.* His ordinary style of conversation, *ib.* His conduct to candidates, while holding examinations for fellowships, 17, 18. Anecdote of the thief who stole his plate, 19. His liberal assistance to Collins, the infidel, 20. Acquainted with Sir Isaac Newton, Dr. Mead, Dr. Wallis, Baron Spanheim, Roger Cotes, &c, *ib.* Particularly amused with the character of Sir Roger de Coverley, in the *Spectator*, 21. His curious apology for devoting his time to criticism, 21, 22. Took no account of pecuniary matters, 22. His controversy with the Bishop of Ely, 23. Curious plagiarism of Pope, in his *Essay on Man*, from a sermon of Dr. Bentley's, 24, 26. His youngest daughter Joanna, the *Phæbe* of Byron's *Pastoral*, 30. Reply to Arthur Kinsman, 36. Death of, lamented by Cumberland, 37. His opinion of Joshua Barnes, *ib.*; of Pope's *Homer*, 38, 39; of Warburton, 38.

Bentley, Mrs. wife of Dr. Richard Bentley, 22. Daughter of Sir John Bernard, *ib.* Related to the Cromwells and Saint Johns, *ib.* Her manners tinctured with hereditary reserve, *ib.* Piety of her life—death, *ib.*

Betty, Master, remarks on his acting, 467.

Bickerstaff, Cumberland's controversy with, 159, 160.

Blackmore, opinion of, by Locke, 89.

Bland Burges, Sir James, warmly commended by Cumberland, 475. Associated with him, in the composition of the *Exodiad*, *ib.*, 564, 565. Assistance expected from, in this *Life of Cumberland*, 566. His poem of *Richard Cœur de Lion*, written with more rapidity than Pope translated *Homer*, 583. His reputation as an author considered, 583, 584. Cumberland's posthumous papers bequeathed to him, Mr. Sharpe, and Mr. Rogers, 598.

Blank verse, remarks on, 57.

Box Lobby Challenge, a play by Cumberland, notice of, 547. A humorous epilogue written for, by George Colman, 547.

- Brothers, The*, a play by Cumberland, account of, and remarks on its characters, 169—177. Original characters in, 171. Mrs. Inchbald's opinion of, 172. Controverted, *ib.* Cumberland's opinion of, 173. Delicate flattery of Garrick in the epilogue, 175. The prologue makes many enemies, 176.
- Buckinghamshire, Earl of*, his eldest daughter married to Cumberland's son, Richard, 596.
- Burges, Sir James Bland*, *See* Bland Burges.
- Burke, Edmund*, comparison between him and Dr. Johnson, in the poem of Retrospection, 247—249. Observations on his style, 251, 252. Warburton's opinion of, 252. His pamphlet on the Revolution admired by Cumberland, 538.
- Burleigh, Lord*, his opinion of Spenser, 89.

C.

- Calvary*, a poem by Cumberland, remarks and critique on, 526—528. Ranked by Dr. Drake with *Paradise Lost*, 527, 528. Examination of the claim, 528, 529. Cumberland's opinion of, 523.
- Calypso*, remarks on Cumberland's opera of, 340, 341.
- Camoëns' Lusiad*, and Mickle's translation, remarks upon, 103. Poem of Cumberland's on the same subject, 104—107.
- Caractacus*, by *Mason*, remarks on, 72—74. A drama of this name, written by Cumberland, 77.
- Carmelite*, remarks on Cumberland's tragedy of, 468—470. Extract from the prologue to, 468. Dedicated to Mrs. Siddons, 466. Extract from the epilogue, spoken by Mrs. Siddons, 470.
- Chatham, Earl of*, command to his son, 61.
- Choleric Man*, observations on Cumberland's drama of, 306—312. Examination of the *dramatis personæ*, 307—311. Dedicated to *Detraction*, 311.
- Chorus, Greek*, remarks on, 73—77.
- Christian Revelation*, tract on, by Cumberland, noticed, 540, 541. Conclusion of, 541—545.
- Clare, Lord*, his criticism upon the West Indian, 207.
- Clarke, Mr. Hewson*, sketch of Cumberland's colloquial talents, 593.
- Clergyman, political*, not a consistent character, 79.
- Clonfert*, Cumberland's father promoted to the see of, 142. Episcopal residence described, 165—168. Fairies prevalent at, 196. Catholic priest of, 197.
- Coats, Mr.*, tribute to, 465.
- Collins*, the infidel, Dr. Bentley's liberal assistance to, 20.
- Colman*, tries how far the aid of scenic effect might contribute to the adoption of *Elfrida*, 76.

- Colman, George*, writes a humorous epilogue for the Box Lobby Challenge, 547.
- Comedy, sentimental*, a defence of, 281.
- Contemplatist*, a series of essays, extract from, 447, 448.
- Cotes, Roger*, a friend of Dr. Bentley, 20.
- Country Attorney*, a comedy by Cumberland, notice of, 547.
- Crane, Reverend Mr.*, an inmate in Lord Halifax's family, 92. Formerly his lordship's tutor, *ib.* His opinions listened to with submissive deference, *ib.* Rejects the offer of Elphin bishopric, 137.
- Criticism, anonymous*, remarks on, 569—573.
- Cromek, Mr.*, Cumberland's unsolicited exertions in behalf of his picture of Chaucer's Pilgrims, 576.
- Cumberland, Bishop*, paternal great-grandfather of the subject of these memoirs, 2. A man of conscientious feelings, primeval integrity, and eminent for his acquirements as a scholar, *ib.* Son of a citizen of London; educated at St. Paul's school; takes his degree at Cambridge, *ib.* First intension to study physic, *ib.* Directs his views to the church, 3. obtains a living at Stamford; loved and respected for the unaffected piety of his manners, 4. Publishes his work, *De Legibus Naturæ*, &c. *ib.* This work recommended by Johnson, *ib.* Nominated Bishop of Peterborough, 5. First intelligence of this nomination conveyed to him by a paragraph in the newspapers, *ib.* Hesitates to accept it, *ib.* Prevailed on by his friends, 5, 6. Finds leisure to prosecute his literary studies, 6. Spends much time in examining Sanchoniatho's Phœnician History, 7. A zealous supporter of the established religion, *ib.* His bookseller refuses to publish Sanchoniatho's Fragment, 8. Published by his son-in-law, after his death, 9. Lives to an advanced age, *ib.* His death gentle, *ib.* Character by his grandson, 9—11.
- Cumberland, Richard, Esq.* descended from a literary stock, 1. Improved the possession bequeathed to him by his ancestors, 1, 2. Proud of the literary honours of his family, 2. His ancestors, *ib.* Literary world indebted to, for anecdotes of Dr. Bentley, 12. How far his *Memoirs* are used in the present work, 27, 28. A pleasing accumulation of literary anecdote, 28. The circumstance, with which he alludes to his own conduct, 29. Could not write his own life, so as to preclude the present attempt, 30. Born Feb. 1732, in the Master's Lodge of Trinity College, *ib.* His account of his parents, 31, 32. His mother quick in apprehension, 31. Fond of ridicule, *ib.* Never passed a day, without reading a portion of her Bible, *ib.* Her son's declaration concerning her, 32. His father educated at Westminster School, 34. Admitted Fellow-commoner of Trinity-College, Cambridge, *ib.* Married at the age of twenty-two, *ib.* Prevailed upon to take the rectory of Stanwick, *ib.*

His character, 34. Cumberland, inferior in years and knowledge, to his sister Joanna, 35. His confusion of ideas on reading the 115th Psalm, *ib.* Sent to the School of Bury St. Edmund's, in his sixth year, kept by Arthur Kinsman, *ib.* His inauspicious progress, *ib.* Produces his first attempt in English verse, 40. Spends his vacations at Stanwick, with his father, 40, 41. Partakes the dangerous and unmanly sport of hunting with him, 41. Reads poetry to his mother, by which his ear was formed to poetical harmony, 43. These readings, chiefly from Shakspeare, 44. Writes a piece, called *Shakspeare in the Shades*, 44. Description of, and extracts from, 44—50. Removed to Westminster School, 50. His contemporaries there, 50, 51. Labours with unremitting assiduity at his studies, 52. Boards with Edmund Ashby, Esq. in Peter-street, Westminster, 54. First witnesses the acting of Garrick, 55. Attempts a translation from Virgil's Georgics, 56. Extract from, 58. His sister, Joanna, dies of the small-pox, 59. Her loss severely felt, *ib.* He is sent to Trinity-College, Cambridge, *ib.* Names of his tutors, 60. Idleness, no part of his character, *ib.* Writes some elegiac verses on the death of the Prince of Wales, 63. Keeps an act, *ib.* Sleeps only six hours, lives chiefly on a milk diet, and uses the cold bath, *ib.* Attacked by a rheumatic fever, which keeps him six months hovering between life and death, 64. Is gratified by hearing from Cambridge of the high station adjudged him, among the Wranglers of his year, *ib.* Changes his undergraduate's gown, and obtains his degree of Bachelor of Arts, with honours hardly earned, 64. His remarks upon this species of academical education, 64—70. Conceives himself destined for the church, 70. Meditates upon a plan for a Universal History, 71. The plan abandoned, *ib.* Mason's *Elfrida* praised by him, 72. Visits a relation in Yorkshire, 80, 81. Attempts an imitation of Spenser's *Fairy Queen*, 81. Replies in a poem, of quatrains, to one written by Lady Susan, daughter of the Earl of Galloway, *ib.* The poem, 82—84. Imitates Hammond, 84. Specimen of, 84, 85. Reprimanded by his mother for the practice of imitation, 85. Returns to Cambridge, 90. An alteration of the existing statutes of Trinity College, agreed upon in his favour, *ib.* Appointed confidential Secretary to Lord Halifax, 91. Hastens to London, and enters upon his new office, 93. Lodgings provided for him in Downing-street, near Mr. Pownall's, *ib.* Pownall appointed to instruct Cumberland in the details of business, *ib.* A mere man of office, *ib.* Cumberland, a mere collegian, *ib.* His vexation and disappointment, 94. Advised to inform himself respecting the colonies, 95. Travels through volumes of useless knowledge, which told every thing, but what he wanted to know, *ib.* Various facts which he collected, employed as plots for his dramatic pieces, *ib.* Accompanies

his patron to Cambridge, *ib.* Has hopes of a fellowship, *ib.* His election opposed by Dr. Mason, *ib.* Obtains his fellowship, 96. Returns home, *ib.* Again immersed in the duties of his official situation, *ib.* Writes an elegy on *St. Mark's Eve*, published by Dodsley, *ib.* This passes into oblivion, *ib.* Excites the notice of Charles Townshend, by solving an enigma, which required a geometrical process, 97. A report submitted to him, by Townshend, *ib.* His poetical version of a passage in the *Troades* of Seneca, 98. Remarks on the continued strain of eulogy in Cumberland's Memoirs, 100—102. His intimacy with the grandson of Bishop Reynolds, 103. Affair of gallantry with his friend's sister, *ib.* Projects an epic poem on the discovery of India by the Portuguese, *ib.* Fragment of, 104—107. His grief for the death of Lord Halifax's wife, 108. Her character, *ib.* Attends Lord Halifax to London, *ib.* Visited by Mr. Higgs, *ib.* Visits Bishop Sherlock, 109. Becomes a frequent guest at *La Trappe*, 112. Divides his leisure time between Fulham and *La Trappe*, *ib.* Visits Eastbury, the seat of Mr. Dodington, 113. Gains a lay-fellowship, 122, 123. Writes the Banishment of Cicero, 124. Marries Miss Ridge, 130. Takes the rank of Ulster Secretary, 132. Has an offer of a baronetcy, 135. Rejects it, 135, 136. His father promoted to the See of Clonfert, 143. Applies for the office of Under Secretary to Lord Halifax, 147. Rejected, *ib.* Reasons for it, *ib.* Retires from the employment of Lord Halifax, *ib.* Accepts the situation vacated by Mr. Sedgwick, *ib.* His intercourse with Lord Halifax at an end, 149. Reflections on, *ib.* His felicity in being independent of booksellers, 158. Has a controversy with Bickerstaff, 159, 160. Roused to a pursuit of the legitimate drama, by the remonstrance of Smith, 161. Visits Ireland, accompanied by his wife, and part of his family, 162. Studies the Irish character, 164. Returns from Ireland, and brings out the comedy of the Brothers, 169. Some delicate flattery of Garrick in the epilogue, the cause of his acquaintance with this actor, 175, 176. The origin of Sir Fretful Plagiary, 178—180. Visits his father, and projects the comedy of the West Indian, 187. Account of adventures which happened to him in Ireland, 191—201. Returns to England, and offers his West Indian to Garrick, 202. Enters the path of controversy, 218. Writes against Bishop Lowth, 218, 219. Title of the pamphlet, 220. Loses a present sent to his uncle, as the presumed author of the tract, 222. Writes to the donor, 222, 223. Made the heir of a distant relation, but ultimately disappointed, 223, 224. Cumberland's own account of this curious transaction, 224—230. His celebrity from the performance of the West Indian, 235. Obtains him the society of Johnson, Burke; Goldsmith, Reynolds, &c. *ib.* His temperate, but discriminate censure of Mr.

Walter Scott, 273—278. Produces the *Fashionable Lover*, 280. His literary enterprises, suspended for a time by the death of his parents, 301. His account of that event, 302—306. Produces his *Cholerie Man*, 306. Writes two odes, one to the Sun, and one to Dr. James, 312, 313. Alters and spoils Shakspeare's *Timon of Athens*, 313. Specimen of, 314. Writes the *Note of Hand*, a farce, 318. Fecundity of his muse, 319. Produces the *Battle of Hastings*, 320. An imitator of Shakspeare, 325—328. Introduced to Lord George Germain, 334, 335. Visits him at Stoneland, 337. Produces the opera of *Calypso*, 340. The *Widow of Delphi*, or the *Descent of the Deities*, 341. Writes the defence of *Perreau*, 342. Solicited to take the defence of Dr. Dodd, 342. Declines it, *ib.* Intimate with Lord Mansfield, 348. Addresses some lines to him, 348—351. Departs upon his Spanish mission, 352. A brief recapitulation of that affair, *ib.* Arrives at Aranjuez, 355. Fails in his undertaking, 357. Ignorance of an Ecclesiastic, 359. Vain of the notice he received from the Royal Family of Spain, 360. The society he kept at Madrid, 360, 361. Period of his recall, 367. Reflections upon Cumberland's account of this business, 369. The dangers of a pinch of snuff in Spain, 380—383. His forbearance in relating the treatment he received from the English government, 384. Addresses a memorial to Lord North, 385. Its failure, 390. His remonstrance with Mr. Secretary Robinson, *ib.* Retires to Tunbridge, 392. Family that accompanied him, 396. Publishes his *Anecdotes of Eminent Painters in Spain*, 397. Accused of attacking Sir Joshua Reynolds, 398. Produces his comedy of the *Walloons*, 406. Produces the *Mysterious Husband*, 413. Writes the *Observer*, 419. Argues against female acquirements, 423. His "few plain reasons for being a Christian," 428. His notions of Political Liberty, *ib.* Takes credit for the character of Abraham Abrahams in the *Observer*, 432. Example how his style might be improved, 451. The *Observer* will convey his name to posterity, 459. His inconsistency in his own statements about himself, 460. An apt quotation from La Fontaine, on this subject, 461. Controversy with Mr. Hayley, respecting the *Life of Romney*, 462. Publishes the tragedy of the *Carmelite*, 465. Enters into controversy with the Bishop of Landaff, 471. Publishes his pamphlet of *Curtius rescued from the Gulph*, *ib.* Pleasing hours passed at Mr. Dilly's, *ib.* Becomes acquainted with Mr. Rogers there, 472. Sells the copyright of his *Memoirs* for £500, 473. Leaves his unpublished papers to the care of Mr. Sharpe, Mr. Rogers, and Sir James Bland *Berges*, 475. This bequest frustrated by his daughter, Mrs. Jansen, 476. Produces his *Natural Son*, 447. His excellence in prologues and

epilogues, 477. His rapidity of production, not inconsistent with excellence, 490. Produces the comedy of the Impostors, 491. His novel of Arundel, 492. Of Henry, 505. His superiority in depicting the passion of Love, 519. Writes the novel of John de Lancaster, 521. The poem of Calvary, 526. Renders fifty of the Psalms of David into English verse, 539. Publishes his few plain reasons, why we should believe in Christ, &c. *ib.* Enumeration of plays produced by him between 1790 and 1808, 547. Three only deserve notice, *ib.* Peculiarity in his dramas, 561, 562. Writes his *Memoirs*, 563. Writes the *Exodiad*, in conjunction with Sir J. B. Burges, 564. Edits the *Select British Drama*, 569. Projects a weekly newspaper, *ib.* Publishes the *London Review*, 568. His absurd examination of Mr. Townsend's *Armageddon*, 574. His exertion in behalf of Mr. Cromeck, 576. Writes his last work, the *Retrospection*, published a few days before his death, *ib.* Personal occurrences of his life enumerated, 580. Heads the Tunbridge volunteers, 581. Remonstrates with Mr. Hayley, 582. His adulation of Sir James Bland Burges, 583. Has an antipathy to Gray, 585. Passes much of his time at Ramsgate, 586. Writes his *Memoirs* there, *ib.* Anecdote of him and a bookseller, 587. His death, 588. Buried in Westminster Abbey, 589. Address of Dr. Vincent on this occasion, *ib.* Objections to, 590. Instances of unmeaning and unnecessary oaths, used in Cumberland's works, 591, 592. Sketch of his colloquial talents, by Mr. Hewson Clarke, 593—595. Opinion of his literary character, 595. Solicited, before he died, a subscription to a quarto edition of his unpublished dramas, *ib.* Shortly to be given to the world, 596. His family at his death, *ib.* Bequeaths his property to his youngest daughter, *ib.* His will, 597—600. His property sworn under £450, 600. The impropriety of disregarding his particular and public request, that his posthumous papers should be committed to the care of Sir James Bland Burges, Mr. Sharpe, and Mr. Rogers, considered, *ib.* Concluding remarks, 601.

*For a further account of Cumberland's works, see the following articles:—*Affectation, lines on, Anecdotes of Spanish Painters, Armourer, Arundel, Banishment of Cicero, Battle of Hastings, Box Lobby Challenge, Brothers, Calvary, Calypso, Camœns, Caractacus, Carmelite, Cholerick Man, Christian Revelation, Country Attorney, Curtius rescued from the Gulph, Days of Yore, Dependant, Don Pedro, Eccentric Lover, Exodiad, False Impressions, Fashionable Lover, First Love, Hammond, Henry, Hints to Husbands, Impostors, Jew, Jew of Mogadore, Joanna of Montfaucon, John de Lancaster, Last of the Family, *London Review*, Love for Love, *Memoirs*, Mysterious Husband, Natural Son, Note of

Hand, Observer, Odes, Plain Reasons for believing in Christ, Prince of Wales, elegiac verses on, Retrospection, Sailor's Daughter, Select British Drama, Shakspeare in the Shades, St. Mark's Eve, elegy on, Summer's Tale, Timon of Athens, Troades of Seneca, Tunbridge, Virgil's Georgics, Walloons, Wat Tyler, West Indian, Wheel of Fortune, Widow of Delphi, Word for Nature.

Cumberland, Charles, son of the above, marries the daughter of General Matthew, 596. In the army, *ib.*

———— *William*, a post captain in the navy, 596.

———— *Richard*, marries the eldest daughter of the Earl of Buckinghamshire, 596. Dies at Tobago, *ib.*

———— *George*, killed at the siege of Charlestown in America, 596.

———— *Elizabeth*, marries Lord Edward Bentinck, son to the late Duke of Portland, 596.

———— *Sophia*, marries William Badcock, Esq. 596.

———— *Frances Marianne*, notice of, 596; and *see* Jansen.

———— *Joanna*, Cumberland's eldest sister, character of, 35. Dies, of the small-pox, 59.

Cartius rescued from the Gulph, a pamphlet of Cumberland's directed against Dr. Parr, 471.

D.

Dance, Mr., tribute to, 465.

Davies, Mr., remarks upon Cumberland's alteration of Shakspeare's Timon of Athens, 316, 317. Sneering scepticism of, reprov'd, 410.

Days of Yore, a drama by Cumberland, notice of, 548.

De Legibus Naturæ, written by Bishop Cumberland, 4.

De Mortuis nil nisi bonum, this maxim examined, 33.

Dependant, the, a play by Cumberland, notice of, 547.

Dilly, Mr., suggestion at one of his literary dinners, 471. Pleasing hours passed by Cumberland at, 471, 472.

Dodington, Bubb, his splendid villa of La Trappe, 109, 110. His associates there, 110—112. Dr. Thompson his body-physician, 111, 112. His seat at Eastbury described, 113, 114. His wardrobe and equipage, 114, 115. His character, 116—118. Wrote small poems, 121. His diary, *ib.* His collection of anecdotes, repartees, &c., 121, 122.

Don Pedro, a drama by Cumberland, notice of, 547.

Drake, Dr., his opinion of Calvary, 527, 528. His competency as a critic examined, 529—531.

Dramatic Author, popularity attending a successful one, in preceding times, 231. Causes of this, and of the decay of that popularity, 232—235.

Dryden, mock-criticism of Mr. Pinkerton on, 435.

Dublin, state of society in, 139.

Duelling, arguments in defence of, 496. Extract from *Nubilia* on, 497, 498. Attempts to institute a Court of Honour, 496, 497.

E.

Eastbury, the seat of Mr. Dodington, described, 113, 114.

Eccentric Lover, a play by Cumberland, notice of, 547.

Ecclesiastic, in Spain, ignorance of, 359.

Elfrida, by *Mason*, praised much by Cumberland, 72. Remarks on, 72, 73.

Elphin, *Bishopric* of, offered to Dr. Crane, 137. Rejected, *ib.*

Ely, *Bishop* of, controversy of Bentley with, 23.

Encomiums, upon the dead, always to be suspected, 32, 33.

Enigma, which required a geometrical process, solved by Cumberland, 97.

Epic Poem, on the discovery of India by the Portuguese, projected by Cumberland, 103. Remarks on Camões, and his translator, *ib.* Fragment of Cumberland's poem, 104—107. Calvary, 526—529. Exodiad, 564.

Escorial, Cumberland's account of, superseded by more recent travels, 359, 360.

Essay on Man, curious plagiarism in, from a sermon of Dr. Bentley's, 24—26.

European Magazine, solicitation of Cumberland in, 595.

Exodiad, a poem written by Cumberland, in conjunction with Sir James Bland Burges, remarks on, 564. Opinion of the work, 565.

Eyre, Lord, his character, 192, 193.

F.

Fame, *histrionic*, fleeting qualities of, 54. Brevity of, feelingly enforced by Schiller, 55.

False Impressions, a play by Cumberland, notice of, 548.

Fashionable Lover, observations on Cumberland's drama of, 284—300. Prologue to, applauded, 288. Extract from, 288—290. Action of, skillfully contrived, 289. Colin Macleod, total failure of this character, 290. Bridgemore, 292. Mortimer, 295. Lord Abberville, Tyrrel, Dr. Druid and Aubrey, 297. Language of this drama, 298.

Faulkner, George, his character, 141—143. Prosecutes Foote for lampooning him on the stage of Dublin, 143.

Female Education, modern, defective system of, 41—43.

First Love, a play by Cumberland, notice of, 547. Inferior to the Jew or Wheel of Fortune, 557. Its characters examined, 557—560. Mrs. Inchbald's observations on, 558. Extract from this drama, 559.

Florida Blanca, Count, letter to Cumberland, 371.

Fox, Mr. Henry, character of, 118.

G.

Gainsborough, Mr., tribute to, 465.

Galloway, Earl of, a poem written by Cumberland, in answer to one of his daughter's, Lady Susan G., 82—84.

Garrick, remarks on his acting, 55, 56. Rejects Cumberland's tragedy of the Banishment of Cicero, 129. Delicate flattery of, in the epilogue to the Brothers, 175. Cumberland's acquaintance with, 175, 176. His corrections in the West Indian, 203.

Gauden, Bishop, extract from his life of Hooker, 456.

Germain, Lord George, succeeds the Earl of Halifax in the colonial department, 334, 335. Cumberland's account of an interview with, 335. His seat at Stoneland, 337.

Gibbon, his own biographer, 28. Has produced a dignified narrative, *ib.* An adequate life of, much desired, 29.

Glover, Mr. author of *Leonidas*, an occasional visitor at La Trappe, 111. MS. copy of his *Medea*, in the possession of Dodington, 120, 121.

Goldsmith, Dr., his portrait by Cumberland, 256—259. Defence of his histories, 260—262. Of his *Animated Nature*, 262. Anecdotes of, 263—269. His *Vicar of Wakefield* sold for sixty guineas, 269. Cumberland's mistake concerning, *ib.* Extract from his poem of *Retaliation*, 270. His epitaph on Cumberland contains more censure than praise, 271, 272. Cumberland's sketch of, in his *Retrospection*, 272. His style examined and praised, 447.

Graham, Sir James, his handsome present to Cumberland, 595.

Gray, Mr., his opinion of the *Nouvelle Heloise* of Rousseau, 90. Cumberland's antipathy to, 585.

Greaves, Mr. Commissary, anecdote of, 19. Cumberland's letter to, 222.

H.

Halifax, Earl of, Lord Lieutenant of Northamptonshire, 80. Appoints Cumberland his confidential secretary, 91. A collateral descendant of a celebrated nobleman of that name, *ib.* A distinguished statesman and scholar, 91, 92. Fond of English poetry, 92. Married to a lady with a large fortune, from whom he takes the name of Dunk, *ib.* Crane, an elderly clergyman, an inmate in the family, *ib.* Formerly his lordship's tutor, *ib.* His opinions listened to with submissive deference, *ib.* Accompanies Cumberland to Cambridge, 95. Loses his wife, 108. Her character, *ib.* Accompanies Cumberland to London, *ib.* Made Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, 131. Accompanied by "single speech Hamilton," *ib.* Circumstance highly to his honour, 133, 134.

Presents Cumberland's father to the see of Clonfert, 143. Receives the seals of Secretary of State, 146. Appoints Mr. Sedgwick his under secretary, *ib.* Rejects the offer of Cumberland, 147. Reasons for it, *ib.* His intercourse with Cumberland terminated, 149. Reflections on, *ib.* Character of, by Cumberland, 152—154. His death, 334. Succeeded by Lord George Germain, *ib.*

Hamilton, Gerard, chief secretary to Lord Halifax, 131. Known by the name of "Single-speech," 132. His character, 136.

Hammond's Elegies, specimen of imitation of, by Cumberland, 84, 85. Remarks on Hammond, 85, 86. Criticism of Dr. Johnson upon, with observations, 87, 88. Vindicated from the aspersions of Dr. Johnson, 88—90.

Hayley, Mr., controversy between him and Cumberland, respecting the life of Romney, 462. Attacks Cumberland, for his character of Bentley, 582. Answered by him, *ib.*

Henderson, the actor, account of, by Cumberland, 406—410. The character of Father Sullivan, in the *Walloons*, written for him, 406.

Henry, a novel by Cumberland, advertisement to, 506. The initial chapters borrowed from Fielding, 507. Its characters examined, 508—521. Extracts from, 512—514. Must always be read with pleasure, 520.

Higgs, Rev. Mr., visits Cumberland, 108.

Hill, Sir John, defence of, 259, 260.

Hillsborough, Earl of, letter to Cumberland, 368.

Hints to Husbands, a drama, by Cumberland, notice of, 548. Defect in, 560, 561. Characters examined, 561.

Holberg, his own biographer, 28. Has produced a lively narrative, and communicated as much as posterity wish to know of him, *ib.*

Honour, Court of, attempts to institute, 496, 497.

Hoppner, Mr., gives his opinion of Mr. Cromek's picture of Chaucer's Pilgrims, 576.

I.

Idolatry, the capital error of the Romish church, 7. Earliest accounts of, in Sanchoniatho's Phœnician History, 8.

Impostors, remarks on Cumberland's comedy of, 491. Characters in, 491, 492. Very inferior to his other plays, *ib.*

Inchbald, Mrs., her mode of criticism, 214, 215. Opinion of the Jew, 551. False position of, controverted, 552. Her sensible observations on the Wheel of Fortune, 555. Remarks on First Love, examined and censured, 558—560.

Inscriptions, monumental, infidelity of, 33.

Ireland, travelling in, 163.

J.

- James, Dr.*, extract from Cumberland's ode to, 313.
- Jansen, Mrs.*, frustrates the bequest of Cumberland, her father, 476. Surprise at, *ib.* Loses her husband in the ill-fated expedition to Walcheren, 579. Remarks on her declining the interference of Sir James Bland Burges, Mr. Sharpe, and Mr. Rogers, 601.
- Jew, the*, a play by Cumberland, notice, 547. Examination of the characters in, 549, 550. Mrs. Inchbald's opinion of, 551. False position of her's controverted, 552.
- Jew of Mogadore*, an opera by Cumberland, notice of, and remarks on, 547, 548.
- Joanna of Montfaucon*, a drama by Cumberland, notice of, 548. Not mentioned by him, *ib.* Adapted from Kotzebue, *ib.* Extract from the prologue, *ib.*
- John de Lancaster*, remarks upon Cumberland's novel of, 521—524. Inferior to Henry and Arundel, 521. Plot and characters examined, 521—525. Exhibits symptoms of mental decay, 522.
- Johnson, Dr.*, his criticism upon Hammond's Elegies, with observations on it, 87, 88. Cumberland's character of, 236—244. Aclumbration of, in the Observer, 244. Comparison between him and Burke in the poem of Retrospection, 247—249. A better Greek scholar, than insinuated by Cumberland, 250, 251.

K.

- Kaunitz, Count*, pleasing anecdote of, 361.
- Kemble, Mr.*, tribute to his excellence as an actor, 466, 467. His performance of Penruddock contributes to the popularity of the Wheel of Fortune, 553.
- Kilmore*, Cumberland's father translated to the see of, 146.
- Kinsman, Arthur*, master of the school at Bury St. Edmunds, 35. Reproves Cumberland, 36. Knew how to make his boys scholars, 52.

L.

- La Fontaine*, quotation from, on the subject of Cumberland's inconsistency in his statements, 461.
- Landaff, Bishop of*, Cumberland's controversy with, 471.
- Last of the Family*, a play by Cumberland, notice of, 547.
- La Trappe*, a splendid villa of Bubb Dodington's, in the parish of Hammersmith, 109, 110. Description of its visitants, 109—112.
- Locke, John*, opinion of Blackmore, 89.
- London Review*, the first number of, published by Cumberland, 569. Abuses of anonymous criticism considered, 569—573. Fate of 573.

Articles written in, by Cumberland, 574. His absurd examination of Mr. Townsend's Armageddon, 574, 575.

Lonsdale, Lord, his handsome present to Cumberland, 595.

Love, Cumberland's superiority in depicting the passion of, 519.

Love for Love, Cumberland's strictures on, noticed, 568.

Lowth, Bishop, appellation of Dr. Bentley, 17. Title of the pamphlet written against, by Cumberland, 220.

Lyttleton, Lord, his criticism upon the West Indian, 207.

M.

Mansfield, Earl of, lines addressed to, by Cumberland, 348—351.

Mason, Dr., opposes Cumberland's election to a fellowship, 95. His reasons for it, 95, 96.

Matthew, General, his daughter married to Charles Cumberland, 596.

Mead, Dr., a friend of Dr. Bentley, 20.

Memoirs, self-written, considerations on, 127.

——— *of Cumberland*, how far used in the present work, 27, 28. A pleasing accumulation of literary anecdote, 28. Remarks on the continued strain of eulogy in, 100, 101. Miss Seward's opinion of, 181. Motives for the extracts from, 255. Public indebted to Mr. Sharpe for the suggestion of, 473. Copy-right of, sold for 500*l.* ib. Notice of, 564, 565. Pleasing accession of anecdote in the supplement to, 583. Great part of the *Memoirs* written at Ramsgate, 586.

Menander, observations on, 283.

Mengs, the Spanish painter, Cumberland's critique on, 398.

Mickle's translation of Camöen's *Lusiad*, remarks on, 103. Fragment of a poem on the same subject by Cumberland, 104—107.

Minden, Lord Sackville's solemn declaration respecting the affair of, 489.

Moliere, quotation from applicable to Cumberland, 567.

Murphy, Arthur, his remarks on Cumberland's alteration of Shakspeare's *Timon of Athens*, 316.

Mysterious Husband, remarks on Cumberland's tragedy of, 413—418. Epilogue to, 417.

N.

Natural Son, a comedy by Cumberland, prologue to, 478. Remarks on its characters, language, and sentiments, 479—484.

Newton, Sir Isaac, a friend of Dr. Bentley, 20. Anecdote of, 70.

Nichols, Dr., master of Westminster School, had the art of making his scholars gentlemen, 52.

North, Lord, Cumberland's memorial to, 385.

Note of Hand, or, a Trip to Newmarket, a farce by Cumberland, acted with moderate applause, 318.

Nottingham, contested election for the county of, 78.

Novels, remarks on, 492, 493. Written by the greatest men, 493.

Nubilia, extract from, on duelling, 497, 498.

Nugent, Lord, his criticism upon the West Indian, 207.

O.

Oaths, unmeaning and unnecessary, instances of, in Cumberland's works, 591.

Observer, adumbration of Dr. Johnson, in, 244. Begun by Cumberland during his residence at Tunbridge, 419. Comparison of this work with the essays of Johnson, Addison, and Steele, 419. Examination of some particular papers in this work, 422. The religious papers commended, 427. Character of Abraham Abrahams written upon principle, 432. Mock criticism on Othello, anticipated by Mr. Pinkerton, 433. Specimen of, 437. General character of the Observer, 441. Examination of its style, 444—446. A work that will convey Cumberland's name to posterity, 459.

Odes, by Cumberland, to the Sun, extract from, 312. To Dr. James, 313.

O'Rourke, three brothers of this name at Clonfert, 198. Characters of, 199, 200.

Othello, specimen of mock-criticism on, in the Observer, 437. Defective, 440, 441.

P.

Parr, Dr., Cumberland's pamphlet of Curtius rescued from the Gulph, directed against him, 471.

Perreau, defence of, written by Cumberland, 342.

Peterborough, Bishop of, See Cumberland, Bishop.

———— See of, Dr. Richard Cumberland nominated to, 5. Moderately endowed, 6.

Physicians in the country, may secure a respectable practice, 3. In the metropolis, confounded with a throng of aspirers, ib.

Pinkerton, Mr. mock-criticism upon Dryden's Ode, 435.

Plagiarism, curious, of Pope's in his Essay on Man, from a sermon of Dr. Bentley's, 24—26.

Plain Reasons why we should believe in Christ, &c., a tract by Cumberland, buffoonery in, 540, 541. Conclusion of, 541—545.

Pocock, Dr., Bishop of Ossory, his character, 138. Visited by Cumberland, ib.

Pope, in his *Dunciad*, speaks contemptuously of Dr. Bentley's skill in verbal criticism, 11. Represents him obsequiously attended by Walker, vice-master of Trinity-College, 13. Curious plagiarism of, in his *Essay on Man*, from a sermon of Dr. Bentley's, 24—26. Opinion of Dr. Bentley on his translation of Homer, 38. Challenged by Dr. Bentley's son, 39. Declines the challenge, *ib*.

Pownall, Mr., acting secretary to the Board of Trade, 93. Appointed to instruct Cumberland in the details of business, *ib*. A mere man of office, *ib*.

Prince of Wales, father of his present Majesty, elegiac verses upon the death of, by Cumberland, 63.

R.

Reading, the pleasures of, 395.

Retaliation, a poem, extract from, 270.

Retrospection, a poem by Cumberland, extracts from, 153, 154, 189, 190, 272, 273, 278, 393, 394, 577, 578. Published a few days before his death, 576. Character of, 576, 577.

Reynolds, Reverend Decimus, appoints Cumberland his heir, 224, 225. Letter to, 227.

——— *Sir Joshua*, Cumberland accused of attacking his character, 398. Tribute to, 465.

Richard Cœur de Lion, a poem by Sir James Bland Burges, written with more rapidity than Pope translated Homer, 583.

Robinson, John, Cumberland's letter to, 374.

Robinson, Doctor, translated from the see of Ferns, to that of Kildare, 140.

Rodney, Sir George Brydges, character of, by Cumberland, 343—347.

Rogers, Mr. becomes acquainted with Cumberland, at Mr. Dilly's, 472. Remarks on his Pleasures of Memory, *ib*. 473. Advice to him, on his poetical talents, 473. Cumberland's posthumous papers, bequeathed to him, Sir James Bland Burges, and Mr. Sharpe, 596.

Romney, Mr., controversy between Cumberland, and Mr. Hayley, respecting his life, 462. Tribute to, 465.

Rousseau's attempt to record all the events of his life, 28. Doubtful whether he unfolded all, *ib*. Gray's opinion of his *Nouvelle Heloise*, 90.

S.

Sackville, Lord, visibly declines in health, 484. The old friend and patron of Cumberland, *ib*. Character and peculiarities of, 484—488. Cumberland's account of his last moments, 489. His solemn declaration respecting the affair of Minden, *ib*.

Sailor's Daughter, a play by Cumberland, notice of, 547.

- Sanchoniatho's* Phenician History, much time spent in examining, by Bishop Cumberland, 7. Earliest accounts of idolatry in, 8. Refused to be published by Bishop Cumberland's bookseller, 8. Published after his death by his son-in-law, 9.
- Schiller*, extract from, on the brevity of histrionic fame, 55.
- School-connexions*, remarks on, 51, 52.
- Scott, Mr. Walter*, portrait of, by Miss Seward, 184. Observations on his poetry, 273—279. On the Lady of the Lake, 276. On Don Roderick, 277. Cumberland's temperate but discriminate censure of, 278.
- Sedgwick, Mr.*, appointed under-secretary to Lord Halifax, 146. The situation which he vacates, accepted by Cumberland, 147.
- Select British Drama*, edited by Cumberland, 568. His History of the Rise and Progress of the Stage in, *ib.*
- Seneca*, a passage in the Troades of, versified by Cumberland, 98—100.
- Seward, Miss*, opinion of Cumberland's Memoirs, 181, 186, 187. Censure of her letters, 181—184. Instances of her vanity, affectation, and vitiated phraseology, *ib.* Her hyperbolical adulation of Mr. Southey, 183. Her portrait of Mr. Walter Scott, 184.
- Shakspeare in the Shades*, a dramatic piece by Cumberland, 44. Description of, and extracts from, 44—50.
- Shakspeare's Timon of Athens*, altered and spoiled by Cumberland, 313. Specimen of, 314. Murphy's and Davies' opinion of, 316.
- Sharpe, Mr.*, tribute of affection to, by Cumberland, 473. Public indebted to, for the suggestion of his Memoirs, *ib.* Lines addressed to, 474, 475. Accedes to Cumberland's request, 475. Cumberland's posthumous papers bequeathed to him, Sir James Bland Burges, and Mr. Rogers, 598.
- Sherlock, Bishop*, visited by Cumberland, 109. In the last stage of bodily decay, *ib.* His mind unaffected, *ib.* Arranges his sermons for publication, while in this state, *ib.*
- Siddons, Mrs.*, Cumberland's Carmelite, dedicated to her, 465. Speaks the prologue, 470.
- Smith, Dr.*, Master of Trinity College, agrees upon an alteration of the existing statutes in favour of Cumberland, 90.
- Smith, Mr.*, his remonstrance with Cumberland, 161.
- Society for the suppression of Vice*, some advice to, and remarks on, 450, 451.
- Southey Mr.*, Miss Seward's adulation of, 183. His *Madoc*, neglected by the present generation, *ib.*
- Spain*, brief history of painting in, 402.
- Spänsheim, Baron*, a friend of Dr. Bentley, 20.
- Spanish Painters*, anecdotes of, published by Cumberland, 397.

- Spenser*, opinion of, by Lord Burleigh, 89.
Stage, history of the rise and progress of, by Cumberland, 568.
Stanwick, rectory of, accepted by Cumberland's father, 34. Exchanged by him for the vicarage of Fulham, 109.
St. Mark's Eve, elegy on, written by Cumberland, 96. Published by Dodsley, ib. Passes into oblivion, ib.
Stone, Primate, his character, 139, 140.
Stoneland, a seat of Lord George Germain, 337, 338.
Stothard, Mr., exertions in his behalf by Cumberland, 577.
Stubbs, Mr. tribute to, 465.
Style, observations on simplicity of, 253, 254. General remarks on, 444—446.
Summer's Tale, a drama by Cumberland, remarks on, 156, 157.
Sun, extract from Cumberland's ode to the, 312.

T.

- Terence*, observations on his *Andria*, 283.
Thompson, Dr., a physician out of practice, Dodington's body-physician, description of, 111. Anecdote of, 111, 112. An inmate of La Trappe, ib.
Tickell, remarks upon his elegy on the death of Addison, 86, 87.
Timon of Athens, Shakspeare's play of, altered and spoiled by Cumberland, 313. Specimen of, 314—316. Murphy's and Davies' opinion of, 316.
Tiranna, a celebrated Spanish actress, account of, 362—367.
Townsend, Charles, one of the Lords of Trade, notices Cumberland for solving an enigma, which required a geometrical process, 97. Submits a report to him, for his inspection, ib. Affords him an opportunity of displaying his scholastic acquirements, 97, 98.
Townsend, Mr., absurd examination of his *Armageddon*, by Cumberland, 574, 575.
Trinity College, Cambridge, an alteration in its existing statutes, agreed upon, in favour of Cumberland, 90.
Troades, of Seneca, a passage in, versified by Cumberland, 98—100.
Tunbridge, invocation to, from the *Retrospection*, 393. Volunteers of, headed by Cumberland, 581.
Turner, Mr. Sharon, sends a complimentary letter to Cumberland, 584, 585.

V.

- Vicar of Wakefield*, copyright of, sold for sixty guineas, 269. Cumberland's mistake concerning, ib.
Vincent, Dr., Dean of Westminster, his address delivered on the funeral of Cumberland, 589. Objections to, 590.

Virgil's Georgics, part of, translated by Cumberland, 56, 57. Extract from, 58.

W.

Walker, vice-master of Trinity College, represented as the obsequious attendant of Dr. Bentley, 13.

Wallis, Dr., a friend of Dr. Bentley, 20.

Walloons, remarks on Cumberland's comedy of, 406. Henderson's character in, *ib.* 407.

Warburton, Bishop, Dr. Bentley's opinion of, 38. Complimentary letter to Mr. Cumberland, on the Banishment of Cicero, 125, 126. Opinion of Burke's style, 252.

Warren Dr., a competitor of Cumberland, while at school, 39.

Wat Tyler, a comic opera, by Cumberland, altered and produced under the name of the Armourer, 547.

West, Mr., tribute to, 465.

West Indian, presented to Garrick, 202. Accepted and performed, 203, 204. History of its success, 204—206. Copyright sold to Griffin for 150*l.* who boasted of having sold 12,000 copies, 205, 206. Criticisms upon it, by Lord Lyttleton and Lord Clare, 207. By Lord Nugent, 208. Observations upon its fable, characters, and language, 208—215. Belcour, 209, 210. Charlotte Rusport, Louisa Dudley, 210. Major O'Flaherty, 210—213. Inferior to the delineations of Irish characters, by Colman and Miss Edgeworth, 213. Ungrammatical construction of the language, 214. Mrs. Inchbald's mode of criticism, 214, 215.

Westminster, Dean of, address delivered on the funeral of Cumberland, 589. Objection to, 590.

Westminster Abbey, Cumberland buried in Poet's Corner there, 589.

Westminster School, Cumberland removed to, 50. His contemporaries there, 50, 51.

Wheel of Fortune, a play, by Cumberland, notice of, 547. Kemble's acting in Penruddock contributes to its popularity, 553. Outline of the plot taken from Kotzebue's *Misanthropy and Repentance*, 553. Its characters examined, 553—557. Mrs. Inchbald's observation on, 554.

Whig, constitutional, character of, 79.

Widow of Delphi; or, the Descent of the Deities, remarks on Cumberland's opera of, 341.

Word for Nature, a play, by Cumberland, notice of, 547.

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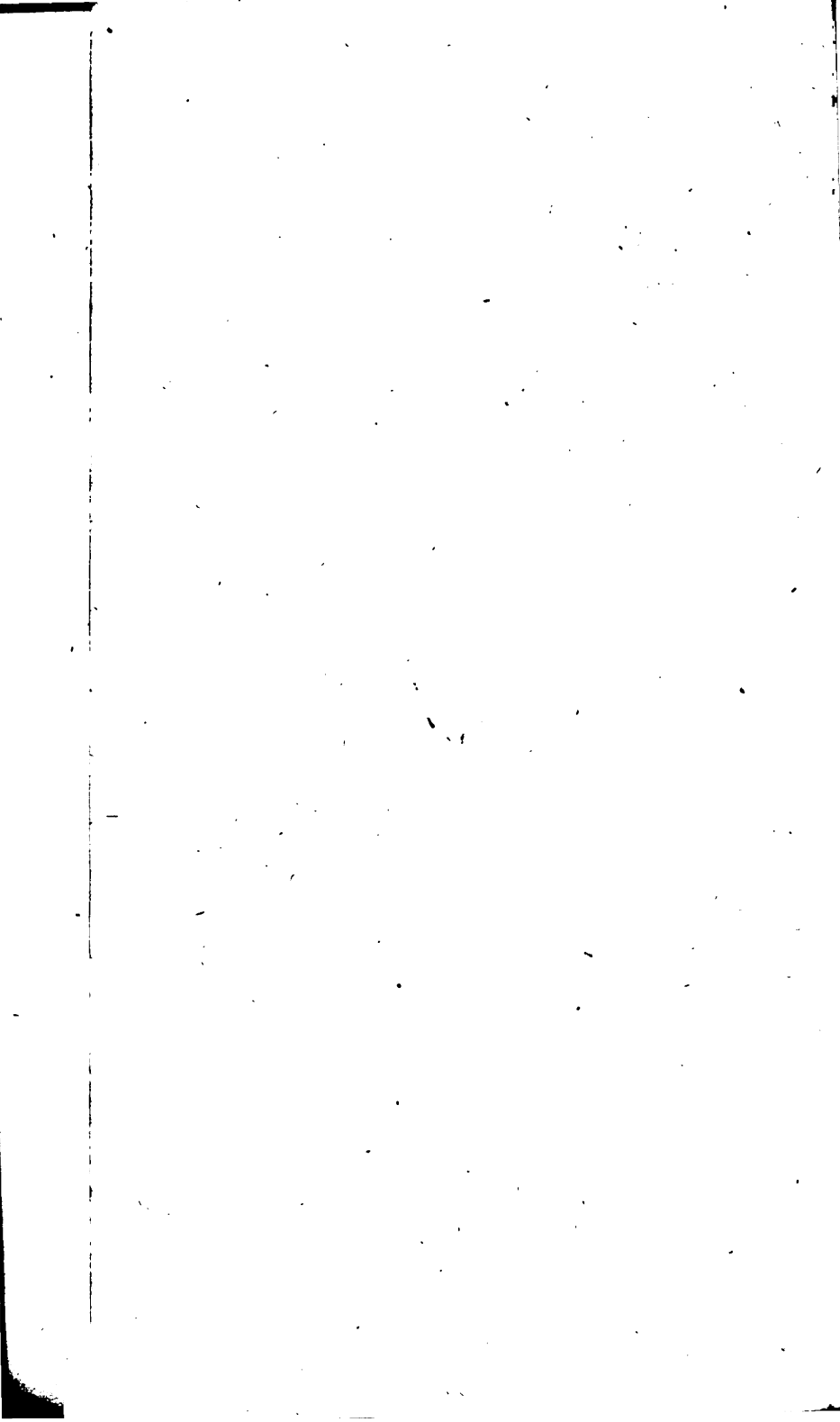
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